

ANNOUNCER: FUNDING FOR
"COUNTRY MUSIC" WAS PROVIDED

BY THE FOLLOWING MEMBERS

OF THE BETTER ANGELS SOCIETY:

THE BLAVATNIK FAMILY FOUNDATION,
THE SCHWARTZ/REISMAN FOUNDATION,
THE PFEIL FOUNDATION,

DIANE AND HAL BRIERLEY,
JOHN AND CATHERINE DEBS,

THE FULLERTON FAMILY
CHARITABLE FUND,

BY THE PERRY AND DONNA
GOLKIN FAMILY FOUNDATION,

JAY ALIX AND UNA JACKMAN,

MERCEDES T. BASS,

AND FRED AND DONNA SEIGEL

AND BY THESE ADDITIONAL MEMBERS.

[BOB WILLIS AND HIS TEXAS
PLAYBOYS' "NEW SAN ANTONIO
ROSE" PLAYING]

WILLIS:
OH, TEAR IT DOWN, MR. MAN.

TEAR IT DOWN NOW.

MAJOR FUNDING WAS PROVIDED
BY: THE ANNENBERG FOUNDATION;

BY THE ARTHUR VINING DAVIS
FOUNDATIONS,

DEDICATED TO STRENGTHENING
AMERICA'S FUTURE

THROUGH EDUCATION;

BY BELMONT UNIVERSITY,
WHERE STUDENTS CAN STUDY

MUSIC AND MUSIC BUSINESS
IN THE HEART OF MUSIC CITY;

BY THE SOUNDTRACK OF AMERICA--
MADE IN TENNESSEE--

TRAVEL INFORMATION
AT TNVACATION.COM;

BY THE METROPOLITAN GOVERNMENT
OF NASHVILLE

AND DAVIDSON COUNTY;

BY ROSALIND P. WALTER;

BY THE CORPORATION
FOR PUBLIC BROADCASTING;

AND BY VIEWERS LIKE YOU.

THANK YOU.

âa HEADING DOWN SOUTH
TO THE LAND OF THE PINE âa

âa THUMBING MY WAY INTO
NORTH CAROLINE âa

âa STARING UP THE ROAD,
PRAY TO GOD I SEE HEADLIGHTS âa

âa SO, ROCK ME, MAMA,
LIKE A WAGON WHEEL âa

âa ROCK ME, MAMA,
ANY WAY YOU FEEL âa

âa HEY, MAMA, ROCK ME

[CHEERING AND APPLAUSE]

[OVERLAPPING CHATTER]

MAN: ALL RIGHT,
LET'S DO A COUPLE OF SONGS

THAT WE'D LIKE TO DO
ON THE SIDE OF...

MAN 2: ...GENTLE, SPEEDY
ALKA-SELTZER INVITES YOU
TO ENJOY A MINUTE WITH MINNIE.

MINNIE PEARL: HOW-DEE!
I'M JUST SO PROUD TO BE HERE...

MAN 3: WELL, IT'S JUNE CARTER!

MAN 4:

1, 2, 3, 4.

["GRAND OLE OPRY SONG" BY
NITTY GRITTY DIRT BAND PLAYING]

[CROWD CHEERING]

â€” COME AND LISTEN TO MY STORY

â€” IF YOU WILL, I'M GONNA TELL

â€” ABOUT A GANG OF FELLERS
FROM DOWN AT NASHVILLE... â€”

NARRATOR: BY THE EARLY 1960s,
FOR MOST FANS,

THE CENTER OF COUNTRY MUSIC WAS
FIRMLY LOCATED ON FIFTH AVENUE

IN DOWNTOWN NASHVILLE,
WHERE EVERY SATURDAY NIGHT,

RADIO STATION WSM BEAMED OUT
THE GRAND OLE OPRY,

BROADCAST LIVE FROM THE STAGE

OF THE RYMAN AUDITORIUM.

NITTY GRITTY DIRT BAND: â€” FIRST
I'LL START WITH OLD RED FOLEY â€”

â€” DOIN' THE "CHATTANOOGA SHOE"

â€” WE CAN'T FORGET
HANK WILLIAMS â€”

â€” WITH THEM GOOD OLD
"LOVESICK BLUES" â€”

â€” IT'S TIME FOR ROY ACUFF TO GO
TO MEMPHIS ON HIS TRAIN... â€”

BUD WENDELL: THE SURVEYS SAID
THAT THE AVERAGE PERSON DROVE

650 MILES, ONE WAY,
TO COME TO NASHVILLE

TO COME TO THE GRAND OLE OPRY.

PEOPLE THAT CAME, YOU COULD
TELL, THEY WERE WORKING PEOPLE.

THE LINES WOULD GO DOWN
FIFTH AVENUE AND AROUND

DOWN BROADWAY

AND--AND LITERALLY, THOUSANDS
OF PEOPLE WOULD BE IN LINE

TO GET A LIMITED NUMBER
OF TICKETS.

NITTY GRITTY DIRT BAND:
â€”a ...ERNEST TUBB'S NUMBER

â€”a "TWO WRONGS
WON'T MAKE A RIGHT" â€”a

â€”a AT THE GRAND OLE OPRY
EV'RY SATURDAY NIGHT â€”a

â€”a

MARTY STUART: ALL OF
ITS CHILDREN HAD COME

TO THE MOTHER CHURCH
OF COUNTRY MUSIC.

IT WAS ALMOST LIKE A BADGE
OF HONOR, THAT YOU HAD TO,

UH, BRING YOUR CULTURE
WITH YOU TO THE TABLE.

THAT'S WHY BOB WILLS AND HIS
GUYS BROUGHT US WESTERN MUSIC;

THAT'S WHY HANK WILLIAMS
BROUGHT THE SOUTH WITH HIM,
FROM HONKY-TONKS.

JOHNNY CASH BROUGHT
THE BLACK LAND DIRT OF ARKANSAS.

BILL MONROE BROUGHT MUSIC OUT
OF KENTUCKY BLUEGRASS MUSIC.

WILLIE NELSON BROUGHT
HIS POETRY FROM TEXAS.

PATSY CLINE BROUGHT
HER HEARTACHE FROM VIRGINIA.

I MEAN, IT--IT WAS
THE MOST WONDERFUL PARADE

OF SONS AND DAUGHTERS OF AMERICA

THAT BROUGHT THEIR HEARTS
AND THEIR SOULS

AND THEIR EXPERIENCES,
AND IT GAVE US A GREAT ERA
IN COUNTRY MUSIC.

NITTY GRITTY DIRT BAND:
â€œ...RIGHT AT THE GRAND OLE OPRY
EV'RY SATURDAY NIGHT â€œ

[SONG ENDS,
CHEERING AND APPLAUSE]

["WHEN TWO WORLDS COLLIDE"
BY JEAN SHEPARD PLAYING]

SHEPARD: â€œ YOUR WORLD
WAS SO DIFFERENT â€œ

â€œ FROM MINE, DON'T YOU SEE?
AND WE... â€œ

NARRATOR: DURING THE MID-1960s,
THE UNITED STATES FOUND ITSELF

IN THE MIDST OF PROFOUND
CULTURAL CHANGE

AND STUBBORN RESISTANCE TO IT;

TORN BETWEEN PEACEFUL PROTESTS
AND SENSELESS VIOLENCE;

HOPEFUL IDEALISM
AND ANGRY DESPAIR.

SHEPARD:
â€œ ...WHEN TWO WORLDS COLLIDE

â€œ YOUR WORLD...

NARRATOR: ALL OF IT WOULD BE

REFLECTED IN COUNTRY MUSIC.

SHEPARD: â€œ ...THINGS SWEET
AND GOOD... â€œ

NARRATOR: A YOUNG MOTHER
FROM THE HOLLERS OF KENTUCKY

WOULD STAND UP FOR THE RIGHTS
OF WOMEN WITH UNCOMMON BLUNTNESS

AND PAVE THE WAY FOR OTHER WOMEN
ARTISTS TO DO THE SAME.

A MISSISSIPPI SHARECROPPER'S SON

WITH BIG DREAMS WOULD FULFILL

THEM, WHEN PEOPLE RESPONDED
TO THE QUALITY OF HIS VOICE

INSTEAD OF THE COLOR
OF HIS SKIN.

TWO DESCENDANTS OF
THE DEPRESSION AND THE DUST BOWL

WOULD TURN
BAKERSFIELD, CALIFORNIA,

INTO A MUSICAL MECCA OF ITS OWN.

AND A DARK-EYED,
DEEP-VOICED TROUBADOUR

FROM DYESS, ARKANSAS,
WOULD SOMEHOW EMBODY

NEARLY EVERYTHING THE SIXTIES
CAME TO STAND FOR:

HEEDLESS SELF-DESTRUCTION AND
A CONCERN FOR SOCIAL JUSTICE;

AN EAGERNESS TO EXPERIMENT
WITH NEW IDEAS,

AND A YEARNING FOR OLD-FASHIONED
PERSONAL REDEMPTION.

SHEPARD:
"...WHEN TWO WORLDS COLLIDE

" I'VE BEEN EVERYWHERE, MAN,
I'VE BEEN EVERYWHERE, MAN..."

BILL ANDERSON: COUNTRY RECORDS,
IN THOSE DAYS,

DID NOT SELL ENOUGH COPIES
FOR THE ARTIST

TO REALLY MAKE A LIVING
JUST OFF OF THEIR RECORDS.

MAN: WHERE YOU BEEN, HANK?

" BEEN TO RENO,
CHICAGO, FARGO "

" MINNESOTA, BUFFALO, TORONTO,
WINSLOW, SARASOTA..."

ANDERSON: SO THE ARTIST HAD
TO GET IN THE STATION WAGON,

OR, LATER ON, THE BUSES,

AND TAKE THEIR MUSIC
OUT TO THE HINTERLANDS.

WE WOULD TAKE A TOUCH
OF HOME TO THESE PEOPLE.

WE WOULD TAKE
THEIR MUSIC TO THEM.

HANK SNOW: â€œ ...BOSTON,
CHARLESTON, DAYTON, LOUISIANA,
WASHINGTON, HOUSTON... â€œ

ANDERSON: IT TOOK THEM BACK
TO SOMETHING THAT WAS FAMILIAR

TO THEM, SOMETHING
THAT THEY LOVED...

SNOW: â€œ ...I'VE BEEN
EVERYWHERE, MAN... â€œ

SOMETHING THAT THEY HAD
GOTTEN AWAY FROM.

SNOW: â€œ I'VE BEEN EVERYWHERE

HAZEL & ALICE:
â€œ LOST LIKE A GRAIN OF SAND
UPON THE SANDS OF TIME... â€œ

CONNIE SMITH: I WORKED
FRONTIER RANCH.

I WORKED HILLBILLY PARK,

PONDEROSA PARK,

FIREMEN FESTIVALS, BEAN SOUP
FESTIVAL--YOU NAME IT.

WE--YOU KNOW, WE'D WORK 'EM ALL.

AND THEY WOULD BRING THE KIDS
FROM BABIES ON UP.

HAZEL & ALICE:
â€œ I'LL BE GONE...

SMITH: SO IT--IT WAS ALL
A BIG FAMILY.

ANDERSON: I REMEMBER,
AT SUNSET PARK IN WEST GROVE,

PENNSYLVANIA, WE WOULD DO
3 SHOWS ON A SUNDAY.

AND A WEEK BEFORE, I'D GET
A LETTER FROM SOMEBODY,

"WELL, NOW, WE'RE BRINGING HAM
AND POTATO SALAD AND"--

HA HA HA!--
"CHOCOLATE PIE AND ICED TEA.

"NOW WE EXPECT YOU BOYS
TO COME OVER AND EAT WITH US NOW

BEFORE THE SHOW,
BETWEEN THE SHOWS."

YOU COULD GAIN A LOT OF WEIGHT
PLAYING THOSE PARKS.

HA HA HA!

STUART: THE INDUSTRY WAS
TRULY BUILT ONE HANDSHAKE

AT A TIME,
ONE AUTOGRAPH AT A TIME.

ERNEST TUBB WAS ONE
OF THOSE LEGENDARY EXAMPLES.

HE WOULD SIT ON THE EDGE OF
A STAGE IN A FOLDING CHAIR

AND SIGN POPCORN BOXES TILL
THE VERY LAST SOUL WAS GONE.

THE WORD WAS,
"THOSE PEOPLE PUT US UP HERE."

["FOGGY MOUNTAIN ROCK"
BY FLATT & SCRUGGS PLAYING]

ROY CLARK: ONCE THEY ACCEPT YOU
AS PART OF THEIR FAMILY,

THEY'RE THERE FOR LIFE.

YOU MAY NOT HAVE ANOTHER
HIT RECORD, BUT YOU ALREADY

MADE ENOUGH THAT THEY KNOW WHO
YOU ARE, AND THEY LIKE YOU.

I CAN'T IMAGINE ANYBODY GOING UP
TO, UH, FRANK SINATRA

AND PATTING HIM ON THE BACK
AND SAY, "HOW YOU DOIN', FRANK?"

I MEAN, YOU WOULDN'T DO THAT.

SMITH: I HAD A WOMAN UP
IN WISCONSIN,

SHE CAME TO A FESTIVAL
I WAS SINGING AT, AND SHE LEANED

OVER THE AUTOGRAPH TABLE AND SHE
SAID, "I LOVE YOUR MUSIC.

I LISTEN TO IT EVERY DAY
ON MY VICTROLA."

AND THAT JUST MEANT
THE WORLD TO ME.

I MEAN, SHE MEANT IT
WITH ALL OF HER HEART.

THE GUYS TELL ME,
"YOU GOT ME THROUGH VIETNAM,"

OR THE WOMEN TELL ME,
"I HAD A ROUGH MARRIAGE,

AND I'D PLAY YOUR MUSIC AND I
COULD GO ANOTHER DAY."

AND I THINK,
"WELL, NOW, THAT'S--
THAT'S WHAT I'M LIVING FOR.

THAT'S MY CALL.
THAT'S MY REASON."

STUART: IT WAS A BEAUTIFUL SIGHT
IN THE BACKWOODS OF MISSISSIPPI

TO SEE THOSE TEXAS TROUBADOURS
GETTING OFF THAT BUS,

LOOKING LIKE STARS.

BILLY WALKER: "I'D LIKE TO BE
IN CHARLIE'S SHOES..."

STUART: MATCHING PINK SUITS
WITH PURPLE PIPING.

THE HATS, THE BELTS,
THE GUITAR STRAPS,

AND WHEN ERNEST GOT OFF THE BUS,
HE WAS WEARING A PINSTRIPE SUIT

AND A WHITE HAT AND A WHITE
SHIRT AND--AND A RED SCARF,

AND HE LOOKED
50 FEET TALL TO ME.

NARRATOR: MANY OF THE STARS GOT
THEIR FLASHY CLOTHES

FROM NUDIE COHN'S SHOP
IN HOLLYWOOD,

WHERE MANUEL CUEVAS WAS
THE HEAD TAILOR,

WORKING ON DESIGNS
THE ARTISTS SUGGESTED.

CUEVAS: I HAD PEOPLE,
FRIENDS, THAT WERE KINGS
IN THE COUNTRY MUSIC.

WALKER: " ...WALKIN'
BACK AND FORTH... "

CUEVAS: MARTY ROBBINS, HE SAYS,

"NOW, I WANT YOU TO MAKE ME
SOME BUTTERFLIES

AND I WANT YOU TO MAKE ME
FLOWERS, I WANT TO MAKE..."

CUEVAS: OK.
HEH HEH HEH!

WALKER: " ...THESE NIGHTS
IN CHARLIE'S SHOES... "

NARRATOR: PORTER WAGONER
INSISTED THAT HIS SUIT

BE FESTOONED WITH WAGONS
AND WAGON WHEELS.

JIMMY C. NEWMAN CALLED HIMSELF
"THE ALLIGATOR MAN"

AND WANTED HIS COSTUME
TO REFLECT IT.

ONE OF HANK SNOW'S
FAVORITE OUTFITS FEATURED

TURTLES AND FROGS.

WALKER: " ...BACK AND FORTH
ACROSS THE... "

ANDERSON: I'VE ALWAYS FELT
THAT AN ENTERTAINER
SHOULD LOOK UNIQUE.

I THINK THAT'S PART
OF WHAT PEOPLE BUY TICKETS FOR.

I DON'T THINK THEY BUY A TICKET
TO SEE THEIR NEXT-DOOR NEIGHBOR.

BUT, AS FAR AS THEM BEING
COMFORTABLE, THEY WERE HEAVY.

OH, MY GOODNESS.
YOU GET OUT ON A--
ON A SUMMER STAGE

AT A FAIRGROUNDS IN THE MIDDLE
OF AUGUST, IN THE DAYTIME,

YOU'RE WEARING ONE OF THOSE
THINGS, YOU'RE GOING TO LOSE

10 POUNDS WHILE YOU'RE
OUT THERE TRYING TO SING.

NARRATOR: FOR MOST PERFORMERS,
THE LONG MILES

AND CEASELESS TRAVEL WERE
SIMPLY A FACT OF LIFE.

["WILL THE CIRCLE BE UNBROKEN"
BY BOBBY HORTON PLAYING]

LARRY GATLIN: GET IN
AND OUT OF AIRPLANES;

IN AND OUT OF BUSES;
IN AND OUT OF HOTELS;

EATING ON THE ROAD--
IT IS A JOB.

SO, ONE THAT WE LOVE,
BUT FOR ANYBODY WHO THINKS IT'S

ALL GLAMOUR AND IT'S ALL THIS,
YOU GO DO THAT SHOW

AND GET THROUGH AT 10:00 AND
THEN SLEEP FOR ABOUT 600 MILES

AT 80 MILES AN HOUR AND GET UP
AND DO A 2:00 MATINEE

IN THE MIDDLE OF IOWA, WHEN--
YOU KNOW, IN THE SUMMER,
WHEN IT'S 105.

RAY BENSON: THE GUYS
IN THE BAND MAKE A JOKE.

HE SAYS, "WE DON'T GET
PAID FOR PLAYING.

WE GET PAID FOR RIDING."
HEH HEH HEH!

AND THERE WASN'T
ANY INTERSTATES IN THEM DAYS.

I THINK THEY HAD
THE PENNSYLVANIA TURNPIKE,

AND IT WAS ALL BEAT UP.
IT--IT WAS--GET ON THAT THING,

YOU KNOW, YOU COULD CHURN
BUTTER ON THAT DAMN THING.

ANNOUNCER: LET'S WELCOME
JOHNNY CASH!

[CROWD CHEERING]

["UNDERSTAND YOUR MAN" PLAYING]

â€a

CASH: â€a DON'T CALL MY...

NARRATOR: BY 1964,

JOHNNY CASH WAS HEADLINING
TOURS THAT PLAYED

TO PACKED AUDITORIUMS
IN MAJOR CITIES,

NOT BUCOLIC COUNTRY MUSIC PARKS.

HIS SHOWS FEATURED
A GOSPEL QUARTET FROM VIRGINIA

CALLED THE STATLER BROTHERS;

CARL PERKINS,

CASH'S OLD FRIEND
FROM HIS ROCKABILLY YEARS;

AND MAYBELLE CARTER
AND HER 3 DAUGHTERS,

HELEN, ANITA, AND JUNE.

CASH ALSO ASKED MANUEL CUEVAS
TO MAKE HIS OUTFITS,

BUT HE DIDN'T WANT
FLASHY RHINESTONES

AND DESIGNS ON HIS SUITS.

HE DRESSED ONLY IN BLACK,

AND THOUGH HE WAS BILLED
AS A COUNTRY SINGER,

CASH WAS FASCINATED WITH
ALL FORMS OF AMERICAN MUSIC.

DON REID: I'VE NEVER
KNOWN A GUY THAT KNEW
AS MANY SONGS AS HE DID.

HE KNEW EVERY OLD GOSPEL SONG.
HE KNEW EVERY OLD POP SONG.

HE--HE TAUGHT US A SONG--
WE PUT IT ON AN ALBUM ONE TIME--

A OLD INK SPOTS SONG
THAT WE'D NEVER HEARD,

AND HE TAUGHT US
THE LYRICS TO IT.

HE WOULD CARRY A RECORD PLAYER
AND STACKS OF RECORDS
WITH HIM ON TOUR,

AND WE'D SIT IN ROOMS
AT NIGHT AND HE'D PLAY
ALL THESE OLD FOLK SONGS.

HE WAS INTO EVERY FIELD

AND KNEW EVERY SONG
THAT HAD EVER BEEN WRITTEN.

â IF I WAS ON SOME
FOGGY MOUNTAIN TOP... â

NARRATOR: CASH'S
NEWEST INTEREST CENTERED

ON THE FOLK MUSIC REVIVAL,
EMANATING FROM NEW YORK CITY'S

GREENWICH VILLAGE
AND FOCUSING NOT ONLY ON OLD,

TRADITIONAL TUNES, BUT ALSO
ON NEWLY WRITTEN,

HIGHLY PERSONAL LYRICS
AND SONGS OF SOCIAL PROTEST.

BOB DYLAN: "OH, WHAT DID YOU
SEE, MY BLUE-EYED SON?"

NARRATOR: AT ITS FOREFRONT WAS
A PROLIFIC YOUNG SONGWRITER

FROM HIBBING, MINNESOTA--
BOB DYLAN.

DYLAN: "I SAW A NEWBORN
BABY WITH WILD WOLVES
ALL AROUND IT..."

NARRATOR: CASH SENT HIM
A FAN LETTER

AND GOT ONE BACK IN RETURN,

ALONG WITH AN INVITATION
TO APPEAR WITH DYLAN

AT THE 1964 NEWPORT
FOLK FESTIVAL.

CASH: "...BECAUSE YOU'RE MINE,
I WALK THE LINE"

ROSANNE CASH: THEY WERE
ATTRACTED TO EACH OTHER.

HE LOVED BOB, AND BOB LOVED HIM.

BOB SAID THAT WHEN HE FIRST
HEARD "I WALK THE LINE"

ON THE RADIO THAT IT WAS A VOICE

THAT SOUNDED LIKE IT CAME
FROM THE MIDDLE OF THE EARTH.

WHEN YOU SING IT,

I'LL SING
IN HARMONY.

ROSANNE CASH:
THERE'S THIS MOMENT

WHERE DAD AND BOB WERE
AT A PIANO.

[DYLAN PLAYING
"I STILL MISS SOMEONE"]

THEY'RE SINGING "I STILL MISS
SOMEONE, ONE OF MY DAD'S SONGS.

â€

BOTH: â€ I WONDER IF
SHE'S SORRY... â€

ROSANNE CASH: AND BOB KNOWS IT
BETTER THAN DAD.

BOTH: â€ ...SO UNDONE

â€

ROSANNE CASH: HE AND DYLAN WERE
PASSIONATE ABOUT EACH OTHER

AND THE GREENWICH VILLAGE
FOLK TRADITION.

BOTH: â€ ...AND I STILL
MISS SOMEONE â€

THE MELODY CHANGED,
TOO, DOESN'T IT,
A LITTLE BIT?

YEAH, I CHANGED
THE MELODY.
I CAN'T...

NARRATOR: ANOTHER FOLK SINGER
IN GREENWICH VILLAGE

ALSO CAUGHT CASH'S ATTENTION.

â€ IRA HAYES

[GUITAR PLAYING]

â€ CALL HIM DRUNKEN IRA HAYES

â€ HE WON'T ANSWER ANYMORE...

NARRATOR: PETER LA FARGE'S SONG
"THE BALLAD OF IRA HAYES"

TOLD THE STORY OF A PIMA INDIAN
WHO HAD BEEN ONE OF THE MARINES

WHO HOISTED THE FLAG
AT IWO JIMA.

AFTER THE WAR, HAYES HAD
DESCENDED INTO ALCOHOLISM

AND DIED ALONG A LONELY ROAD
ON HIS ARIZONA RESERVATION.

ROSANNE CASH: AND HE STARTED
TAKING PETER TO SHOWS

AND PUTTING HIM ONSTAGE
TO SING "IRA HAYES."

AND THE AUDIENCES DIDN'T CARE,

AND DAD WAS FURIOUS
AND DISAPPOINTED.

HE WAS TRYING SO HARD.
"LISTEN TO THIS GUY.

IT'S SO IMPORTANT."

NARRATOR: UNDETERRED,
CASH DECIDED TO RECORD

AN ENTIRE ALBUM,
"BITTER TEARS," DEDICATED

TO THE NATION'S TROUBLED HISTORY
WITH NATIVE AMERICANS.

CASH: "CALL HIM
DRUNKEN IRA HAYES"

"HE WON'T ANSWER ANYMORE

"NOT THE WHISKEY-DRINKIN'
INDIAN"

"OR THE MARINE
THAT WENT TO WAR..."

NARRATOR: WHEN RADIO STATIONS
WOULDN'T PLAY IT,

HE TOOK OUT A FULL-PAGE AD
IN "BILLBOARD"

WITH AN OPEN LETTER TO DEEJAYS
AND STATION MANAGERS.

"WHERE ARE YOUR GUTS?" IT ASKED.

CASH: "ABOUT A BRAVE
YOUNG INDIAN YOU SHOULD
REMEMBER WELL"

"FROM THE TRIBE OF
THE PIMA INDIAN..."

NARRATOR: CASH NOW ADDED
BENEFIT CONCERTS
ON INDIAN RESERVATIONS

TO HIS SCHEDULE, INCLUDING
PINE RIDGE IN SOUTH DAKOTA,

WHERE HE VISITED THE SITE
OF THE WOUNDED KNEE
MASSACRE OF 1890.

CASH: "THERE THEY BATTLED UP
IWO JIMA'S HILL"

"250 MEN

"BUT ONLY 27 LIVED
TO FIGHT BACK DOWN AGAIN"

"AND WHEN THAT FIGHT WAS OVER
AND WHEN OLD GLORY RAISED"

"AMONG THE MEN TO HOLD IT HIGH
WAS THE INDIAN, IRA HAYES"

"CALL HIM
DRUNKEN IRA HAYES"

"HE WON'T ANSWER ANYMORE..."

EMMYLOU HARRIS: MY BECOMING
A GREAT FAN OF HIS
WAS SOLIDIFIED

WHEN I FOUND, IN THE FOLK BINS
AT MY LOCAL RECORD STORE,

AN ALBUM CALLED "BITTER TEARS,"
WHICH JOHNNY CASH DID,

TALKING ABOUT THE PLIGHT
OF THE AMERICAN INDIAN.

SO IT WAS LIKE,
"OH, HE'S ONE OF US."

HEH HEH!
HE--HE'S A "FOLKIE," TOO.

â€”a ...AND HIS GHOST IS LYING
THIRSTY IN THE DITCH
WHERE IRA DIED â€”a

[CROWD CHEERING AND WHISTLING]

NARRATOR: MEANWHILE, CASH'S
PERSONAL LIFE WAS IN SHAMBLES.

HIS CONSTANT TOURING CONTINUED
TO STRAIN HIS 10-YEAR MARRIAGE

TO HIS WIFE VIVIAN, THE MOTHER
OF THEIR 4 DAUGHTERS.

SHE NOW SUSPECTED, CORRECTLY,
THAT HE WAS HAVING AN AFFAIR

WITH JUNE CARTER,
WHO TRAVELED WITH CASH

AS PART OF HIS PACKAGE SHOWS.

BUT HIS BASS PLAYER
AND CLOSE FRIEND MARSHALL GRANT

WAS EVEN MORE CONCERNED
ABOUT HIS DRUG USE.

ROSANNE CASH: MARSHALL NEVER
TOOK A DRINK OR A DRUG
HIS WHOLE LIFE.

HE FELT TREMENDOUSLY
PROTECTIVE OF DAD.

HE AND JUNE, DURING THE TIME
THE CARTER FAMILY WAS
ON THE ROAD WITH HIM,

THEY WOULD FLUSH PILLS,
FIND--GO IN HIS ROOM,

FIND HIS PILLS,
FLUSH 'EM, UM,

DO EVERYTHING THEY COULD
TO GET HIM FROM POINT "A"
TO POINT "B"

AND SHOW UP FOR THE SHOWS
AND NOT BE HIGH.

NARRATOR: THE ADDICTION CAUSED
CASH TO LOSE WEIGHT,

HOLLOWED OUT HIS CHEEKS,
MADE HIM FIDGETY AND JUMPY.

APPEARING ON PETE SEEGER'S
TELEVISION SHOW

WITH JUNE CARTER, HE SQUIRMED
AND ROCKED IN HIS CHAIR,

UNCOMFORTABLY FUSSED WITH
HIS HAIR AND SCRATCHED HIS NECK,

NERVOUSLY LIT AND RE-LIT
A SERIES OF CIGARETTES,

EVEN ENDED THE SHOW
WITH HIS SHOES OFF.

TAKE SOME SHOES OFF.

[BOTH LAUGH]

NARRATOR: ON TOUR IN EL PASO,
CASH WAS ARRESTED

FOR POSSESSION OF MORE THAN
1,000 AMPHETAMINES.

A PICTURE OF HIM LEAVING
THE COURTHOUSE,

WITH VIVIAN BY HIS SIDE,
MADE NATIONAL NEWS.

ROSANNE CASH:
SHE WAS SO HUMILIATED.

SHE WAS SUCH A PRIVATE PERSON,

AND ALL OF HER FRIENDS KNEW.

MY MOTHER IS VERY EXOTIC-LOOKING

AND HER PEOPLE WERE ITALIAN,

AND THE KU KLUX KLAN
JUMPED ON THIS PICTURE

AND SAID THAT MY DAD WAS MARRIED
TO A BLACK WOMAN

AND STARTED A FIRESTORM.

NARRATOR: THE NATIONAL STATES

RIGHTS PARTY IN BIRMINGHAM,

ALABAMA, REPRINTED THE PHOTO
IN ITS NEWSLETTER, SAYING,

"MONEY FROM THE SALE OF RECORDS
GOES TO SCUM LIKE JOHNNY CASH

TO KEEP THEM SUPPLIED
WITH DOPE AND NEGRO WOMEN."

IT REFERRED TO HIS CHILDREN

AS "MONGRELIZED"

AND CALLED FOR A BOYCOTT

OF HIS SHOWS AND RECORDS.

CASH'S MANAGER MOUNTED
A PUBLICITY CAMPAIGN

THAT EARNED HIS ARTIST
SOME SYMPATHY IN THE PRESS,

BUT NOTHING HE
OR ANYONE ELSE COULD DO

SEEMED ABLE TO KEEP CASH
AWAY FROM HIS DRUGS.

OUT ON THE ROAD, SHOWS WERE
CANCELLED, PROMOTERS SUED HIM.

IN NASHVILLE, THE PHOTOGRAPHER
LES LEVERETT SHOWED UP

TO CAPTURE ONE OF
HIS RECORDING SESSIONS.

CASH ARRIVED 3 HOURS LATE.

LES LEVERETT: HE KICKED
HIS BOOTS OFF, AND IN HIS,
UH, BLACK SOCK FEET,

SAT THERE ON THAT STOOL,

CARRIED IT OVER TO THE WALL,

LEANED HIS HEAD AGAINST THE WALL
WITH A PAD AND A PENCIL,

AND STARTED WRITING
A SONG. HA HA!

HE'S PAYING FOR THIS SESSION;

THAT'S COMING OUT
OF HIS ROYALTY.

INSTEAD OF DOING IT 3 WEEKS AGO
AND BRINGING IT WITH HIM,

HE'S WRITING A SONG.

â€” WERE YOU THERE...

NARRATOR: AND AT THE GRAND OLE
OPRY ONE NIGHT, HE ENDED HIS SET

BY SMASHING ALL THE FOOTLIGHTS
WITH HIS MICROPHONE STAND.

THE MANAGERS TOLD HIM
HE WAS NO LONGER WELCOME

AT THE RYMAN AUDITORIUM.

CASH: â€” ...MY LORD...

NARRATOR: IN 1966,
VIVIAN FILED FOR DIVORCE.

THAT SAME YEAR, JUNE CARTER
DIVORCED HER SECOND HUSBAND,

AND THOUGH SHE LOVED
JOHNNY CASH, TURNED DOWN

HIS REPEATED REQUESTS
THAT THEY GET MARRIED.

HE SEEMED TOO INTENT
ON DESTROYING HIMSELF.

CASH: â€” TREMBLE

GENE?
YEAH, ROD?

HAVE ANY SPOT IN YOUR BAND
FOR ROGER MILLER,
THE FIDDLE PLAYER?

I DON'T KNOW.
WE COULD GIVE IT A TRY.

HEY, ROGER, COME ON
IN HERE, WILL YOU,
PLEASE? AHM.

WELL, THERE'S
THE FIDDLE.

I THINK THERE'S
ANOTHER PART
THAT GOES WITH IT.

YEAH, THERE'S SUPPOSED
TO BE A BOW.

I DON'T USUALLY
COME PREPARED,

BUT LET'S SEE.
JUST HAPPEN--

RIGHT IN THERE
WHERE I KEEP MY
WATERMELON, YES.

HE CAME UP TO ME ONE NIGHT
AT A--A CONCERT AND HE SAID,

"LORENZO"--THAT'S WHAT HE
CALLED ME--HE SAID, "LORENZO."

I SAID, "WHAT?"
HE SAID, "DID YOU EVER NOTICE

HOW MUCH WEIGHT A CHICKEN
CAN GAIN AND NEVER SHOW IT
IN THE FACE?"

MILLER: SOMETHING LIKE...
[MAKES CHUGGING SOUND]

[BAND PLAYING ALONG]

I WAS IN THE WRONG KEY,
BUT THAT'S ALL RIGHT.

ANDERSON: ROGER HAD
A GREAT COUNTRY SOUL
DEEP DOWN INSIDE HIM.

HE HAD LIVED, HE'D BEEN HURT.

HE HAD BEEN ABANDONED, OF--
OF A SORT, IN HIS CHILDHOOD,

AND HE HAD A LOT OF SCARS,
AND HE COVERED UP THOSE SCARS

IN TWO WAYS: ONE BY WRITING
SONGS, LIKE "INVITATION
TO THE BLUES"

AND "WHEN TWO WORLDS COLLIDE,"

AND THEN BY WRITING "DANG ME"

AND "DO WACKA DOO"

AND "YOU CAN'T ROLLER SKATE
IN A BUFFALO HERD."

[PLAYING "ORANGE
BLOSSOM SPECIAL"]

â€

NARRATOR: ROGER MILLER,
FROM AN IMPOVERISHED FAMILY

IN OKLAHOMA, HAD COME
TO NASHVILLE AS A FIDDLER

AND WORKED FOR A TIME
AS A HOTEL BELLHOP.

HE WAS NOW AN ESTABLISHED
SONGWRITER, WHOSE LIGHTNING WIT

AND MANIC SENSE OF HUMOR
ENDEARED HIM TO EVERYONE HE MET.

BUT HIS DREAM OF BECOMING
A MAJOR SINGING STAR

IN HIS OWN RIGHT HAD
NEVER MATERIALIZED;

4 DIFFERENT LABELS
HAD DROPPED HIM

IN 6 YEARS BECAUSE
OF WEAK RECORD SALES.

MILLER: â€ YOUR WORLD
WAS SO DIFFERENT... â€

NARRATOR: DESPITE HIS HEAVY USE
OF AMPHETAMINES, MILLER--

UNLIKE JOHNNY CASH--
NEVER LET IT KEEP HIM

FROM SHOWING UP TO PERFORM.

"HOW LONG CAN HE STAY UP?"
ONE CONCERT PROMOTER ASKED
HIS TOUR MANAGER.

"I DON'T KNOW,"
THE MAN ANSWERED.

"I'VE ONLY BEEN WITH HIM
A YEAR AND HALF.

I DON'T KNOW HOW LONG HE
WAS UP BEFORE THEN."

RALPH EMERY: I THINK IT'S
A WELL-KNOWN FACT

THAT ROGER MILLER WAS THE "KING
OF PILL TAKERS."

ROGER SAID,
"YOU GOT TO BE CAREFUL

WHERE YOU KEEP YOUR CHANGE
AND WHERE YOU KEEP YOUR PILLS."

HE SAID, "THE OTHER NIGHT
I GOT CONFUSED,

AND 'FORE I KNEW IT,
I'D TAKEN 35 CENTS."

HA HA HA!

NARRATOR: IN EARLY 1964,

MILLER HAD GIVEN UP AND DECIDED
TO LEAVE FOR HOLLYWOOD,

WHERE HE HOPED TO FIND WORK
AS A COMIC ON TELEVISION.

BUT HE WAS BROKE AND NEEDED
MONEY FOR THE MOVE.

AS A FAVOR, HIS PRODUCER
ARRANGED TO PAY HIM

\$100 A SONG IF HE'D COME IN
FOR TWO DAYS OF RECORDING.

MILLER SHOWED UP WITH MORE
THAN A DOZEN OF THE SILLIER
SONGS HE HAD WRITTEN.

ONE OF THEM WAS FROM THE POINT
OF VIEW OF A MARRIED MAN

WHO SPENDS ALL OF HIS MONEY
BUYING DRINKS FOR HIS FRIENDS.

MILLER: â B-B-B-B-BU-BU-BUM

[PLAYING "DANG ME"]

â WELL, HERE I SIT HIGH,
GETTIN' IDEAS â

â AIN'T NOTHIN' BUT A FOOL
WOULD LIVE LIKE THIS â

â OUT ALL NIGHT
AND RUNNIN' WILD â

â WOMAN SITTIN' HOME
WITH A MONTH-OLD CHILD â

â DANG ME, DANG ME

â THEY OUGHTA TAKE
A ROPE AND HANG ME â

â HIGH FROM THE HIGHEST TREE

â WOMAN, WOULD YOU
WEEP FOR ME? â

â B-B-B-B-BU-BU-BUM...

NARRATOR: REFLECTING
HIS LOW EXPECTATIONS

FOR THE ALBUM, MILLER NAMED IT
"ROGER AND OUT"

AND LEFT FOR CALIFORNIA.

MILLER: YEAH!

[CHEERING AND APPLAUSE]

NARRATOR: THERE, HE WAS CUTTING
RADIO ADS FOR \$50 EACH

WHEN HE HEARD "DANG ME"
ON HIS CAR RADIO.

IT WAS TAKING OFF
ACROSS THE NATION.

MILLER: â ...THEY OUGHTA TAKE
A ROPE AND HANG ME... â

NARRATOR: HE WAS A STAR AT LAST.

MILLER WAS INVITED BACK
TO NASHVILLE

TO RECORD A FOLLOW-UP ALBUM.

FROM IT CAME
AN EVEN BIGGER HIT.

[CROWD CHEERING]

MILLER: "TRAILERS
FOR SALE OR RENT"

"ROOMS TO LET, 50 CENTS

"NO PHONE, NO POOL, NO PETS

"I AIN'T GOT NO CIGARETTES

"AH, BUT TWO HOURS
OF PUSHIN' BROOM"

"BUYS AN 8-BY-12, 4-BIT ROOM

"I'M A MAN OF MEANS
BY NO MEANS"

"KING OF THE ROAD..."

MILLER: "KING OF THE ROAD"
ROSE TO NUMBER 3

ON "BILLBOARD"'S POP CHARTS.

IN ENGLAND, IT KNOCKED
THE BEATLES' "TICKET TO RIDE"

FROM ITS PERCH AS NUMBER ONE.

MILLER: "I AIN'T GOT
NO CIGARETTES, AH..."

NARRATOR: HE WON
5 GRAMMY AWARDS IN 1964,

6 IN 1965.

ROGER MILLER WOULD GO ON TO HAVE
HIS OWN NETWORK TELEVISION SHOW,

OPEN UP A "KING OF THE ROAD"
MOTOR INN,

WRITE SONGS FOR
A BROADWAY MUSICAL

AND A WALT DISNEY MOVIE,

TRAVEL TO PERFORMANCES
IN A PRIVATE JET.

AND WHENEVER HE VISITED
NASHVILLE, HE MADE A POINT

OF STAYING AT THE MOST
EXPENSIVE SUITE

AT THE ANDREW JACKSON HOTEL,
WHERE HE HAD ONCE WORKED
AS A BELLHOP.

["NASHVILLE CATS"
BY THE LOVIN' SPOONFUL PLAYING]

â

â NASHVILLE CATS PLAY CLEAN
AS COUNTRY WATER... â

NARRATOR: BY THE MID-1960s,
NASHVILLE WAS HOME TO MORE THAN
250 MUSIC PUBLISHERS.

TWO DOZEN RECORD COMPANIES
HAD OFFICES IN TOWN.

COUNTRY MUSIC HAD BECOME
A \$100 MILLION BUSINESS,

EMPLOYING 5,000 PEOPLE.

THE LOVIN' SPOONFUL: â WELL,
THERE'S THIRTEEN HUNDRED AND 52
GUITAR PICKERS IN NASHVILLE... â

NARRATOR: AMONG THE BUSIEST WERE
THE MUSICIANS WHO BACKED UP
THE SINGING STARS

DURING RECORDING SESSIONS
IN THE STUDIOS ON MUSIC ROW.

THEY WERE ALL VIRTUOSOS
ON THE INSTRUMENTS THEY PLAYED.

EACH 3-HOUR SESSION WAS EXPECTED
TO PRODUCE A USABLE TAKE

ON 3 OR 4 SONGS,
WHOSE ARRANGEMENTS WERE

USUALLY IMPROVISED
COLLABORATIVELY ON THE SPOT.

CHARLIE McCOY: THE WAY A TYPICAL
NASHVILLE SESSION WORKS,

WHEN YOU'RE CALLED
FOR A SESSION, THERE'S
NO PREPARATION.

WHEN YOU HIT THE DOOR, YOU HEAR
THE SONG FOR THE FIRST TIME.

NARRATOR: PRODUCERS DREW FROM A
CORE GROUP OF SESSION MUSICIANS.

THEY WERE CALLED THE "A-TEAM."

IT INCLUDED THE PIANO PLAYERS
FLOYD CRAMER

AND HARGUS "PIG" ROBBINS,

WHO HAD BEEN BLIND SINCE AGE 4.

BUDDY HARMAN PLAYED THE DRUMS.

ON BASS, BOB MOORE WOULD
TAKE PART IN 18,000 SESSIONS,

MORE THAN 50,000 SONGS.

PETE DRAKE MASTERED THE
INTRICACIES OF THE PEDAL STEEL.

SO DID LLOYD GREEN.

[GREEN PLAYING
PEDAL STEEL GUITAR]

NARRATOR: AMONG THE TOP
GUITARISTS WERE GRADY MARTIN,

HANK GARLAND, JERRY KENNEDY,

RAY EDENTON, VELMA SMITH,

AND HAROLD BRADLEY,
WHO WOULD BECOME

THE MOST-RECORDED GUITARIST
IN MUSIC HISTORY.

McCOY: I WAS CALLED TO PLAY
ON "ORANGE BLOSSOM SPECIAL"
WITH JOHNNY CASH.

ALWAYS BEEN A FIDDLE TUNE, AND I
WAS TRYING TO FIGURE OUT HOW

TO KIND OF GET THE SAME MOOD.

ON THE CHORUS PART,
THE FIDDLE ALWAYS GOES

INTO THAT RECOGNIZABLE,
UH, TRAIN LITTLE THING.

SO I DECIDED TO TRY
TO REPLICATE THAT.

[PLAYING "ORANGE BLOSSOM
SPECIAL" ON HARMONICA]

NARRATOR: CHARLIE McCOY WAS
BEST KNOWN FOR HIS HARMONICA,

BUT HE COULD PLAY ALMOST
ANY INSTRUMENT.

I PLAY A LITTLE SAX,
A LITTLE TRUMPET.

TRUMPET ON "RAINY DAY WOMEN #12
AND 35" BY BOB DYLAN;

BARITONE SAX ON "PRETTY WOMAN,"
ROY ORBISON;

'COURSE, I PLAYED BASS
ON 3 DYLAN ALBUMS;

JEANNIE SEELY,
"DON'T TOUCH ME";

CHARLIE RICH, "MOHAIR SAM";

PLAYED ORGAN ON "EASY LOVING,"
FREDDY HART;

PLAYED VIBES AND BELLS
ON "BLUE VELVET," BOBBY VINTON;

BUT MORE HARMONICA
THAN ANYTHING ELSE.

["DETROIT CITY"
BY BOBBY BARE PLAYING]

McCOY: OH, AND, UH,
ALSO THE TUNING GUITAR

ON "DETROIT CITY," BOBBY BARE.

â€

BARE: â€ I WANT TO GO HOME...

NARRATOR: THE ANITA KERR
SINGERS OR THE JORDANAIREs,

A GOSPEL QUARTET, PROVIDED
HARMONY IN THE BACKGROUND.

IN ONE YEAR ALONE,
THE JORDANAIRE SANG

ON HITS THAT SOLD MORE
THAN 33 MILLION COPIES.

BARE: "I WENT
TO SLEEP IN DETROIT..."

NARRATOR: A TYPICAL WEEK
FOR A MEMBER OF THE A-TEAM WAS

15 TO 20 SESSIONS,
EACH LASTING 3 HOURS:

10 A.M. TO 1 P.M.,

2:00 TO 5:00, 6:00 TO 9:00,

AND 10 P.M. TO 1 A.M.

McCOY: CHECK YOUR EGO
AT THE DOOR.

THE SONG AND THE ARTIST ARE
THE PICTURE, WE'RE THE FRAME.

WHAT WE NEED TO DO IS
ANYTHING WE CAN DO

TO MAKE THIS SONG BETTER.

MOST OF THE TIME,
LESS IS BETTER.

THE GUY THAT REALLY SET ME
IN THE RIGHT DIRECTION WAS

THE GREAT GUITARIST
GRADY MARTIN,

WHO WAS THE SESSION LEADER FOR
ALL OF OWEN BRADLEY'S SESSIONS.

I'M 21 YEARS OLD.
I'M LIVING MY DREAM.

I'M PLAYING WITH
THE NASHVILLE MUSICIANS,
I'M PLAYING WITH

BIG COUNTRY MUSIC STARS,
AND I WAS FEELING MY OATS.

AND ONE DAY, WE'RE ON
A SESSION, AND HE SAID,

"YOU'RE PLAYING TOO MUCH."

HE SAID, "YOU LISTEN
TO THE LYRICS.

"IF YOU CAN'T HEAR
AND UNDERSTAND EVERY WORD,

YOU'RE PLAYING TOO MUCH."

LLOYD GREEN: WE CUT
A LOT OF BRILLIANT STUFF.

WE CUT A LOT OF JUNK STUFF, TOO.

I MEAN--I MEAN, TO BE HONEST,
IT--YOU CAN'T CUT 4 SONGS

EVERY 3 HOURS AND DO 3 AND 4
SESSIONS A--A DAY AND YEAR IN

AND YEAR OUT, AND NOT HAVE
A LOT OF DISASTERS.

IT WAS AN ASSEMBLY-LINE PROCESS,
BUT WHEN THE MAGICAL MOMENTS

HAPPENED, THEY REALLY
WERE MAGICAL.

BARE: â LAST NIGHT I WENT...

NARRATOR: IN THEIR STUDIOS
ON MUSIC ROW,

OWEN BRADLEY AND CHET ATKINS
HAD BEEN SMOOTHING OUT

COUNTRY MUSIC'S
ROUGHER EDGES FOR YEARS--

WHAT WAS CALLED
THE NASHVILLE SOUND.

IT WAS POPULAR
AND ALSO CONTROVERSIAL.

STUART: AND THE HARD-HITTING,
HARD-NOSED, HONKY-TONK SOUNDS

OF THE FIFTIES AND EARLY SIXTIES
SEEMED TO GIVE WAY

TO MORE OF A VELVET-GLOVE TOUCH.

A LOT OF PEOPLE THOUGHT
IT WAS FORWARD-THINKING;

A LOT OF PEOPLE THOUGHT IT WAS
THE BEGINNING OF THE END.

BARE: â€”a ...I WANT
TO GO HOME... â€”a

HAROLD BRADLEY:
THE NASHVILLE SOUND--

YOU CAN'T SAY NASHVILLE SOUND.

IT'S GOT TO BE SOUNDS.
IT'S GOT TO BE PLURAL.

IF WE HAD JUST ONE SOUND,

WE WOULD HAVE BEEN GONE
A LONG TIME AGO.

NARRATOR: ON MUSIC ROW,
THE MUSICIANS PLAYED

BEHIND THE SCENES;
AT THE RYMAN AUDITORIUM,

THEY PERFORMED IN FRONT
OF LIVE AUDIENCES.

EVERY SATURDAY,
BETWEEN 6:30 AND MIDNIGHT,

MORE THAN 40 DIFFERENT ACTS WERE
USHERED ON AND OFF THE STAGE.

OVER THE AIRWAVES,
IT ALL SOUNDED ORDERLY;

IN PERSON, IT WAS
ORGANIZED MAYHEM.

â€”a FROM THE GREAT ATLANTIC OCEAN
TO THE WIDE PACIFIC SHORES â€”a

â€”a FROM THE QUEEN
OF FLOWING MOUNTAIN â€”a

â€”a TO THE SOUTH BELL
BY THE SHORE... â€”a

GATLIN: THERE WERE
287,000 PEOPLE ON STAGE.

I MEAN, IT LOOKED LIKE
THE CHARIOT RACE IN "BEN-HUR."

ROY ACUFF:

â€” ... THE WABASH CANNONBALL

NARRATOR: AT THE CENTER OF ALL
THE FRENETIC ACTIVITY

STOOD THE MAN WHO HAD JOINED
THE OPRY BACK IN 1938--

ROY ACUFF.

HE WAS NOW IN HIS MID-60s,

AND HIS DAYS OF RECORDING
BIG HITS WERE BEHIND HIM,

BUT WITHIN NASHVILLE'S
COUNTRY MUSIC FAMILY,

ROY ACUFF WAS KING.

VINCE GILL: HE BECAME
THE FACE OF THE OPRY.

HE REALLY WAS PROBABLY

THE BIGGEST NAME ATTACHED
TO COUNTRY MUSIC.

THIS GUY CAME IN AND SAID,
"MR. ACUFF, CAN I HAVE
AN AUTOGRAPH?"

AND HE'S, "SURE," YOU KNOW,
AND HE'S WRITING HIS NAME.

THE GUY SAID, "BOY, I BET YOU
WISH YOU HAD A DOLLAR FOR EVERY

ONE OF THOSE YOU'VE SIGNED,"
AND HE GOES, "OH, I DO"--

[CHUCKLING]--
HANDED HIM BACK
HIS PIECE OF PAPER.

ACUFF: â€” ...BE REMEMBERED
ROUND THE COURTS... â€”

WENDELL: ON RARE OCCASIONS,
THE FELLA THAT SOLD THE TICKETS

WOULD HAVE TOO MUCH TO DRINK,
AND HE'D OVERSELL THE HOUSE.

WELL, IF WE OVERSOLD THE HOUSE,
WE'D JUST RAISE THE BACKDROPS

AND RUN THESE PEOPLE
ONTO THE STAGE AND LET 'EM
STAND ON THE STAGE,

AND WE COULD GET 200
OR 300 PEOPLE ON THE STAGE.

THEY'RE LOOKING AT THE BACKS
OF THE ARTISTS, BUT THE ARTISTS

HAVE ALL GOT TO WALK AROUND 'EM
AND WALK THROUGH 'EM,

AND THEY WERE, LIKE,
IN HOG HEAVEN TO BE
ON STAGE AT THE OPRY.

ACUFF: â€œ...THROUGH THE JUNGLES
ON THE WABASH CANNONBALL â€œ

YEAH.

[SONG ENDS]

[CROWD CHEERING AND WHISTLING]

NARRATOR: TOUR BUSES
NOW ROAMED SOME OF NASHVILLE'S
FINER NEIGHBORHOODS,

JAMMED WITH OUTSIDERS
EAGER TO SEE THE HOMES

OF THEIR FAVORITE
RHINESTONE-CLAD STARS,

LIKE WEBB PIERCE,
WHO HAD A GIANT,

GUITAR-SHAPED SWIMMING POOL
IN HIS YARD

AND SOLD MASON JARS OF
HIS POOL WATER FOR ONE DOLLAR.

["WHO YA HUNCHIN'" BY CHICK WEBB
AND HIS ORCHESTRA PLAYING]

MANY OF NASHVILLE'S UPPER-CLASS
CITIZENS--WHO, FOR YEARS,

HAD LOOKED DOWN THEIR NOSES
AT THE OPRY, ITS MUSIC,

ITS STARS, AND THE KIND
OF PEOPLE IT ATTRACTED--FEARED

THAT THE "ATHENS OF THE SOUTH,"
AS THEY CALLED THEIR TOWN,

WAS BEING RUINED FOREVER.

TOM T. HALL: YOU KNOW,
THE ARISTOCRACY OF NASHVILLE,

THEY DIDN'T WANT NASHVILLE
TO BE "MUSIC CITY U.S.A."

WE DON'T WANT TO BE KNOWN
FOR HILLBILLY MUSIC, YOU KNOW?

SOME OF THEM WOULD TRAVEL
TO EUROPE; WHEN THEY'D SAY,
"WHERE ARE YOU FROM?"

"NASHVILLE, TENNESSEE."
"OH, THE GRAND OLE OPRY?"

AND THEY'D SAY,
"OH, HOLY ...," YOU KNOW,

"THAT COUNTRY MU--HILLBILLY
MUSIC FOLLOWING US
ALL OVER THE WORLD."

NARRATOR: ONE OF THE PEOPLE
WHO TRIED TO REPAIR RELATIONS

BETWEEN THE TWO CULTURES IN TOWN

WAS SARAH OPHELIA CANNON.

SHE LIVED IN ONE OF NASHVILLE'S
MOST EXCLUSIVE NEIGHBORHOODS,

RIGHT NEXT DOOR
TO THE GOVERNOR'S MANSION.

SARAH OPHELIA CANNON WAS ALSO
KNOWN AS MINNIE PEARL...

PEARL: HOW-DEE!

CROWD: HOW-DEE!

NARRATOR: AS MUCH A FIXTURE
ON THE RYMAN STAGE AS ROY ACUFF

AND EVEN MORE BELOVED.

SHE WAS REALLY A VERY
SOPHISTICATED LADY.

SHE--SHE BELONGED

TO A BRIDGE CLUB.

SHE PLAYED TENNIS
OVER HERE AT BELLE MEADE
WITH 4 OR 5 OTHER LADIES,

AND SHE COULD
JUST PUT THAT HAT ON

AND SHE COULD BE
"COUSIN MINNIE PEARL,"

OR SHE COULD TAKE IT OFF
AND BE OPHELIA CANNON.

NARRATOR: MARGARET ANN ROBINSON,
WHOSE FAMILY OWNED WSM

AND THE GRAND OLE OPRY,
OFTEN ENLISTED HER

TO RAISE MONEY FROM THE MUSIC
INDUSTRY FOR HIGH-BROW CAUSES.

ROBINSON:
NASHVILLE WAS CELEBRATING
AN ANNIVERSARY OF THE TOWN.

AND SO I WENT OUT TO SARAH'S
ONE MORNING TO TALK TO HER

ABOUT HER PART IN THIS THING,
IN THIS CITY-WIDE CELEBRATION.

IN THE MIDDLE OF OUR
CONVERSATION, SHE SAID,
"OOP, WE GOT TO GO.

FOLLOW ME TO THE MAILBOX."
AND I THOUGHT, "WELL,
FOR HEAVEN'S SAKES,

SARAH, CAN'T YOU WAIT TILL WE--
I LEAVE TO GET THE MAIL?"
"MM-MMM."

SO WE WALKED DOWN THE DRIVEWAY
AND COMING AROUND THE HILL,

I COULD SEE ONE OF THE
SIGHTSEEING BUSES IN NASHVILLE.

THEY STOPPED AT HER MAILBOX
LIKE THEY ALWAYS DID

AND OPENED THE DOOR,
AND SHE CLIMBED ON THE BUS.

AND SHE'D SAY, "HOW-DEE!
I'M SO GLAD TO SEE YOU!"

THOSE PEOPLE IN THE BUS WOULD
GO HOME AND THEY'D SAY,
"WE MET MINNIE PEARL."

THEN SHE WAS SARAH CANNON AGAIN,
AND WE TALKED ABOUT WHAT
WE'D GO EAT FOR LUNCH

OR WHAT SHE WANTED TO DO
IN THIS NASHVILLE CELEBRATION.

NARRATOR: EVENTUALLY,
THE CITY SURRENDERED,

PUTTING UP SIGNS READING
"WELCOME TO NASHVILLE,

HOME OF THE GRAND OLE OPRY,
MUSIC CITY U.S.A.,"

THOUGH THE OLD SIGNS
WELCOMING VISITORS

TO THE "ATHENS OF THE SOUTH"
REMAINED IN PLACE, TOO.

TOM T. HALL: WE FINALLY
RECONCILED THAT, AND
YOU KNOW HOW WE DID IT?

YOU FOLLOW THE MONEY, YOU KNOW?

[CHUCKLES]

ONCE THEY'D FIND OUT THAT THESE
HILLBILLIES ARE MAKING,

YOU KNOW, A HALF A MILLION
DOLLARS A NIGHT SINGING
THROUGH THEIR NOSE

AND PLAYING THE GUITAR,
"WELL, WE'LL HAVE THEM
OUT TO LUNCH, YOU KNOW,

TO HELP OUT WITH OUR
CHARITY, YOU KNOW?"

["BUCKAROO"
BY BUCK OWENS PLAYING]

NARRATOR: 2,000 MILES
WEST OF NASHVILLE,

IN CALIFORNIA'S
SAN JOAQUIN VALLEY,

A DIFFERENT KIND
OF COUNTRY MUSIC--

UNAFRAID OF ITS ROUGH EDGES--
WAS COMING OUT

OF THE SMOKY DANCE HALLS
IN BAKERSFIELD.

MERLE HAGGARD:
THERE WAS NIGHT LIFE LIKE
YOU WOULDN'T BELIEVE.

THERE WAS 25 BEER JOINTS WITH
A BAND IN EVERY ONE OF THEM.

SOME BARS PLAYED MUSIC
24 HOURS A DAY.

IT WAS ONE BIG CARNIVAL.

IF YOU WERE TO BRING SOMEBODY
BACK FROM THE DEAD THAT LIVED
AT THAT TIME,

TURN 'EM LOOSE OVER
RIGHT NOW, THEY'D BE
IN JAIL IN AN HOUR.

NARRATOR: THE MUSIC BEING
PLAYED CAME TO BE CALLED

THE BAKERSFIELD SOUND.

JEANNIE SEELY: TO ME,
THERE WAS ALWAYS A SHARP EDGE

ON CALIFORNIA COUNTRY MUSIC,
THAT--THAT RIM SHOT,

WE CALL IT, ON THE DRUMS,
ALMOST; TO ME, IT WAS LIKE

FIRING A GUN, WHERE, UH,
IN NASHVILLE, THE SONG WAS--

THE--THE SOUND WAS
BECOMING MORE POLISHED.

NARRATOR: AT THE CENTER
OF IT ALL WAS

BUCK OWENS AND HIS BUCKAROOS.

["STREETS OF LAREDO" PLAYING]

NARRATOR: ALVIS EDGAR OWENS JR.

WAS BORN TO A FAMILY
OF SHARECROPPERS IN 1929

IN NORTH TEXAS, JUST ACROSS
THE RED RIVER FROM OKLAHOMA.

BEFORE HE WAS 4, HE ADOPTED
THE NICKNAME "BUCK"

AFTER A MULE HE ADMIRE.

RUINED BY THE DUST BOWL,
IN 1937

HIS DESPERATE FAMILY
STRUCK OUT FOR CALIFORNIA,

BUT THEY ONLY MADE IT
AS FAR AS MESA, ARIZONA,

WHERE THEY TOOK WHATEVER
FARM JOBS THEY COULD FIND.

"WHEN I GET BIG,"
OWENS REMEMBERED THINKING,

"I'M NOT GOING TO GO
TO BED HUNGRY

AND I'M NOT GOING TO WEAR
HAND-ME-DOWN CLOTHES."

HE QUIT SCHOOL IN NINTH GRADE
IN ORDER TO WORK:

WASHING CARS, PICKING ORANGES,

AND PLAYING GUITAR
IN LOCAL HONKY-TONKS.

BY 1951,

OWENS HAD MOVED TO BAKERSFIELD,

PERFORMING AT ONE OF
ITS ROWDY DANCE HALLS

WITH THE ORANGE BLOSSOM PLAYBOYS
AND SITTING IN

AS A SESSION GUITARIST
IN LOS ANGELES

AT CAPITOL RECORDS.

BUT OWENS' AMBITION WAS
TO BE A RECORDING STAR,

AND HE BEGAN DEVELOPING
A SOUND OF HIS OWN.

OWENS: "YOU'VE BEEN
FOOLIN' ROUND ON ME
RIGHT FROM THE START..."

NARRATOR: HE FASHIONED IT
FOR A.M. RADIO,

EVEN DID PLAYBACKS
IN THE STUDIO ON CAR SPEAKERS,

WITH LESS BASS; HIGHER,
CLEANER-SOUNDING

FENDER TELECASTER
ELECTRIC GUITARS;

PEDAL STEEL;
AND A DANCEABLE BEAT.

OWENS: "...FOOL AROUND
WITH ME..."

NARRATOR: THE MELODIES
AND LYRICS WERE SIMPLE,

SO THAT ANY BAR BAND
COULD PLAY THEM EASILY.

DARIUS RUCKER: I WAS
AN A.M. RADIO KID, AND I USED
TO FLIP THROUGH THE STATIONS

AND I WOULD STOP WHEN I HEARD
A SONG I LIKED.

I REMEMBER HEARING A BUCK OWENS
SONG AND JUST BEING BLOWN AWAY

BY IT 'CAUSE HE CAME OUT
OF THE RADIO SO DIFFERENT.

BUCK CAME OUT WITH ALL
THE BRIGHTNESS AND NO BASS,
JUST ALL TREBLE GUITAR.

HE HAD A WAY OF JUST MAKING ME
WANT TO TURN THE RADIO UP.

OWENS: "I KNOW THAT

"YOU'VE BEEN FOOLIN' ROUND
ON ME RIGHT FROM THE..."

BUCK CAME IN WITH A RAW,

WORK CAMP, TOM JOAD GLARE.

YOU SEE IT.

YOU SEE IT THROUGH THE SMILE.

BUCK DID THINGS
THAT WERE AS BOLD, OR BOLDER,

THAN ANYBODY EVER IN THE HISTORY
OF COUNTRY MUSIC.

IT WAS NOT
A SINGER'S APPROACH;

IT WAS AN INSTRUMENTALIST'S
APPROACH,

AND HE ALSO SANG
WITH THAT KIND OF STACCATO.

HE WOULD COUNT THE SONG IN
SOMETIMES WITH HIS LYRIC,

"TIGER BY THE TAIL"
BEING THE PRIMARY EXAMPLE.

"I'VE...GOT...A

THAT'S 1, 2, 3.

"TIGER BY THE TAIL,
IT'S PLAIN TO SEE"

"I WON'T BE MUCH WHEN
YOU GET THROUGH WITH ME"

THAT'S THAT.

BOTH: "WELL, I'M A-LOSIN'
WEIGHT AND A-TURNIN'
MIGHTY PALE..."

NARRATOR: WITH ITS
UNABASHED TWANG--

AND DON RICH PLAYING GUITAR
AND ADDING HARMONY--

THE BAKERSFIELD SOUND
WAS THE OPPOSITE

OF THE NASHVILLE SOUND,
WHICH OWENS CALLED,

"SOFT, EASY, SWEET RECORDINGS,

"AND THEN THEY POUR A GALLON
OF MAPLE SYRUP OVER IT.

"I ALWAYS WANTED TO SOUND
LIKE A LOCOMOTIVE COMIN'

RIGHT THROUGH THE FRONT ROOM,"
HE SAID.

FANS RESPONDED TO HIS
HARD-CORE APPROACH.

ON ONE RECORD, BOTH THE "A"
AND "B" SIDES TRADED PLACES

AT NUMBER ONE
ON THE COUNTRY CHARTS.

SO THAT NO ONE COULD
MISTAKE WHERE HE STOOD,

HE PUBLISHED A PLEDGE IN
NASHVILLE'S "MUSIC CITY NEWS":

"I SHALL SING NO SONG THAT IS
NOT A COUNTRY SONG," HE WROTE.

"I SHALL MAKE NO RECORD
THAT IS NOT A COUNTRY RECORD.

"I REFUSE TO BE KNOWN AS
ANYTHING BUT A COUNTRY SINGER.

"I AM PROUD TO BE ASSOCIATED
WITH COUNTRY MUSIC.

"COUNTRY MUSIC
AND COUNTRY MUSIC FANS

"HAVE MADE ME WHAT I AM TODAY.

AND I SHALL NOT FORGET IT."

YOAKAM: AND BUCK HAD
A CHIP ON HIS SHOULDER,

AND IT'S IRONIC BECAUSE
HE DIDN'T REALLY WRITE
ABOUT THAT IN HIS MUSIC.

BUCK WAS VERY EFFERVESCENT

IN HIS MUSIC.

AND IT'S A WAY FOR HIM
TO COPE, I THINK, WITH WHAT HE

HAD TO DEAL WITH GROWING UP,
SO IT'S ALWAYS THERE

IN THE TENSION, UNDERNEATH
THE EXPOSED PART OF HIS SONGS
AND SONGWRITING.

BOTH: " LOOKS LIKE I'VE GOT
A TIGER BY THE TAIL "

[SONG ENDS]

[CROWD CHEERING]

NARRATOR: WHEN THE BEATLES
BEGAN DOMINATING THE
AMERICAN AIRWAVES,

MOST PEOPLE IN THE COUNTRY
MUSIC INDUSTRY

VIEWED THEM AS MOP-HAIRED
INTERLOPERS.

BUCK OWENS BECAME
AN OUTSPOKEN SUPPORTER--

"I LIKED THEIR MUSIC
AND THEIR ATTITUDE,

REFUSING TO LET ANYBODY PUSH
THEM AROUND," HE SAID,

THOUGH "I WAS STILL
OLD-FASHIONED ENOUGH
NOT TO LIKE THEIR HAIR."

OWENS: "...NATURALLY

" WELL, I'LL BET YOU I'M
A-GONNA BE A BIG STAR "

" I MIGHT WIN AN OSCAR,
YOU CAN NEVER TELL... "

NARRATOR: AS IT TURNED OUT,
THE BEATLES WERE COUNTRY
MUSIC FANS THEMSELVES.

GEORGE HARRISON'S INITIAL
INTEREST IN GUITARS WAS PROMPTED

BY LISTENING TO HIS FATHER'S
JIMMIE RODGERS RECORDS,

AND CHET ATKINS WAS HIS HERO.

AS A TEENAGER,
JOHN LENNON SANG

HANK WILLIAMS'
"HONKY TONK BLUES"

AROUND HIS HOME IN LIVERPOOL.

YOUNG PAUL MCCARTNEY
LIKED MARTY ROBBINS,

AND DRUMMER RINGO STARR
CITED GENE AUTRY,

THE SINGING COWBOY HE HAD SEEN
IN THE MOVIES AT AGE 8,

AS "THE MOST SIGNIFICANT
MUSICAL FORCE IN MY LIFE."

STARR: THANK YOU. THANK YOU.

THANK YOU. AND NOW WE'D LIKE TO
DO SOMETHING WE DON'T OFTEN DO--

GIVE SOMEONE A CHANCE TO SING
WHO DOESN'T OFTEN SING,

AND HERE HE IS,
ALL OUT OF KEY AND NERVOUS,
SINGING "ACT NATURALLY"--RINGO.

[PLAYING "ACT NATURALLY"]

NARRATOR: WHEN THE BEATLES
WERE RECORDING A NEW ALBUM

AND WANTED A SONG
FOR RINGO TO SING,

HE SUGGESTED "ACT NATURALLY,"

WHICH HAD BEEN BUCK OWENS'
FIRST NUMBER-ONE HIT.

STARR: "WE'LL MAKE A FILM ABOUT
A MAN THAT'S SAD AND LONELY"

"AND ALL I GOT TO DO
IS ACT NATURALLY"

"WELL, I BET YOU I'M

GONNA BE A BIG STAR â€”

â€” WIN AN OSCAR,
YOU CAN NEVER TELL... â€”

NARRATOR: THEY RELEASED IT ON
THE FLIP SIDE OF "YESTERDAY."

STARR: â€” AND ALL I GOT
TO DO IS ACT NATURALLY â€”

HEY!

[SONG ENDS]

[CROWD CHEERING]

NARRATOR: OWENS LOVED IT.

ON TOUR, HE AND THE BUCKAROOS
INCORPORATED A COMEDY ROUTINE

INTO THEIR ACT, DONNING BEATLES
WIGS AND PLAYING THEIR SONGS,

AND HIS OWN RECORDS BENEFITED
FROM THE EXPOSURE.

"I STARTED DEVELOPING
A WHOLE NEW AUDIENCE

OF YOUNG PEOPLE,"
HE LATER RECALLED.

"I GUESS THEY FIGURED,
IF THE BEATLES RECORDED ONE

OF MY HITS, THEN I
MUST BE ALL RIGHT."

["YOU'RE LOOKIN' AT COUNTRY"
BY LORETTA LYNN PLAYING]

LYNN: â€” WELL, I LIKE
MY LOVIN' DONE COUNTRY STYLE â€”

â€” AND THIS LITTLE GIRL
WOULD WALK A COUNTRY MILE... â€”

ELVIS COSTELLO: LORETTA LYNN,
I DON'T THINK SHE GETS
ENOUGH CREDIT AS A SONGWRITER.

LYNN: â€” ...I SAID
A COUNTRY BOY... â€”

COSTELLO: I WENT

AND SANG ON A SONG WITH HER,

AND THE SUGGESTION CAME THAT
WE MIGHT WRITE A COUPLE
OF THINGS TOGETHER.

LORETTA COMES IN, AND SHE'S
JUST ABSOLUTELY DELIGHTFUL.

SHE CAME IN WITH A BOX FILE;
IT SAID "SONGS" ON IT,

AND SHE TIPPED IT OUT
ONTO THE TABLE AND IT'S
FRAGMENTS OF PAPER,

BACKS OF OLD SHOPPING LISTS,
A CARDBOARD BOX

FROM A BOX OF UNDERWEAR
WITH LYRICS WRITTEN ON THEM.

SOMETIMES THEY'RE JUST
A LINE LONG; THEY'RE JUST IDEAS.

AND A PIECE OF PAPER SAYS, UM,
"THANK GOD FOR JESUS."

I SAID, "IS THAT A SONG TITLE?"
SHE SAID, "WELL, IT IS NOW."

LYNN: "â€¦IF YOUR EYES
ARE ON ME... â€¦"

JACK WHITE: WHEN I WAS RECORDING
WITH LORETTA ONCE, SHE WANTED
TO DO A SONG TOGETHER.

IT WAS CALLED
"PORTLAND, OREGON," AND--
AND SHE WAS TELLING ME

WHAT THE LINES WERE,
AND WE WERE GOING TO SING IT
TOGETHER IN A ROOM.

SHE SAYS, UM, "OK,
SO THEN, JACK, YOU SING, UH,

'NEXT DAY WE KNEW LAST NIGHT
GOT DRUNK, BUT WE'D LOVED ENOUGH
FOR THE BOTH OF US.'"

I SAID, "HOLD ON.
WHAT--WHAT DO YOU MEAN?"

YOU SAID, 'NEXT DAY,

WE KNEW LAST NIGHT GOT DRUNK."

I KEPT SAYING IT OVER AND OVER
AGAIN; SHE WAS JUST SITTING
THERE, WAITING FOR ME TO GET IT.

"NEXT DAY, WE KNEW
LAST NIGHT GOT DRUNK?

YOU MEAN, 'LAST NIGHT,
WE GOT DRUNK'?"

"NO, NO, NO." SHE'S LIKE,
"LAST NIGHT GOT DRUNK."

"I'M SORRY, LOR--I DON'T GET IT,
LORETTA," YOU KNOW.

"NEXT DAY WE KNEW
LAST NIGHT GOT DRUNK.'
I'M BLAMING IT ON THE NIGHT.

IT'S THE NIGHT
THAT GOT DRUNK, NOT US.
THAT'S WHY WE DID WHAT WE DID."

WELL, LIKE, I JUST--
YOU KNOW, YOU CAN'T BELIEVE
HOW--HOW BRILLIANTLY INTRICATE

SHE HAS GONE INTO THE METAPHOR
OF THE STORY AND NOT EVEN
MENTIONING IT.

SO WE'RE WORKING ON THE SONG
TOGETHER, AND I--IT'S LIKE,
SHE GOES, "YEAH,

YOU KNOW WHAT I'M TALKING
ABOUT, RIGHT?" HA HA!

I JUST DIDN'T THINK
YOU WOULD HAVE TAKEN IT
THAT FAR IN YOUR BRAIN

AND NOT EVEN TALKED
ABOUT IT, YOU KNOW?

I WAS BROUGHT TO TEARS.
I--I COULDN'T BELIEVE IT, MAN.

LYNN: "I JUST CAN'T GET IT
THROUGH MY HEAD..."

NARRATOR: BY 1965, LORETTA LYNN
HAD BEEN IN NASHVILLE

FOR 5 YEARS, CUTTING RECORDS
FOR THE DECCA LABEL

AS THE "DECCA DOLL
FROM KENTUCKY,"

TOURING CONSTANTLY, AND HOPING
FOR A BREAKTHROUGH.

HER PRODUCER,
OWEN BRADLEY, REALIZED

THAT SOMETHING DIFFERENT WAS
NEEDED, AND IT WOULDN'T BE FOUND

IN THE NASHVILLE SOUND HE
AND CHET ATKINS

HAD BEEN PUSHING
OTHER ARTISTS TO ADOPT.

THERE WAS, HE BELIEVED,
NOTHING SMOOTH

AND POLISHED
ABOUT LORETTA LYNN.

HAROLD BRADLEY: WHEN WE FIRST
RECORDED LORETTA,

I WENT INTO THE CONTROL ROOM
AND I TOLD MY BROTHER, I SAID,

"WHATEVER'S IN THAT WOMAN'S
HEART COMES OUT OF HER MOUTH."

NARRATOR: BRADLEY ENCOURAGED HER
TO RETURN TO THE WAY

SHE HAD FIRST STARTED,
WRITING HER OWN MATERIAL,

JUST AS SHE HAD DONE
AS A TEENAGE WIFE,

MAKING UP SONGS TO ENTERTAIN
HER 4 CHILDREN.

LYNN: â€œ ...OVER YOU

OWEN SAID I WAS ONE
OF THE BEST WRITERS THAT
WALKED INTO NASHVILLE.

HE SAID, "YOU," UM,
"WRITE YOUR NEXT RECORD.

"NO MATTER WHAT IT IS, IT'S
GOING TO BE A HIT BECAUSE
THE TIMES ARE CHANGING,"

AND SAID, "YOU'RE OUT THERE
WORKING AND YOU SEE THE CHANGES,

SO YOU WRITE ABOUT IT,"
SO WE DID THAT.

NARRATOR: SHE TURNED TO THEMES
DRAWN FROM THE EXPERIENCES

OF WOMEN LIKE HERSELF, INCLUDING
HER OWN TURBULENT MARRIAGE.

IN 1966, SHE CAME OUT

WITH "YOU AIN'T WOMAN ENOUGH
TO TAKE MY MAN."

LYNN: "YOU SAY YOU'RE
GONNA TAKE HIM"

"OH, BUT I DON'T
THINK YOU CAN"

"'CAUSE YOU AIN'T
WOMAN ENOUGH"

"TO TAKE MY MAN

LYNN: YOU DON'T WRITE ABOUT
FANTASIES; YOU WRITE

ABOUT LIFE AND TRUE LOVE

AND WHAT WAS GOING ON THAT DAY.

THAT'S THE WAY I DID IT.

JUST LIFE.
I MEAN, THE SONGS ARE JUST LIFE.

IT'S--I'VE SEEN IT,
OR I'VE LIVED IT,

AND I NEVER WOULD TELL
MY HUSBAND WHICH ONE IT WAS.

"AND YOU AIN'T WOMAN
ENOUGH TO TAKE MY MAN"

NARRATOR: IT WAS QUICKLY
FOLLOWED BY ANOTHER SONG

FROM A WIFE'S PERSPECTIVE,

ONLY THIS TIME AIMED

AT A HUSBAND WHO
STUMBLES HOME DRUNK,

EXPECTING SEX.

“ YOU THOUGHT THAT I'D
BE WAITING UP WHEN YOU
CAME HOME LAST NIGHT ”

“ YOU'D BEEN OUT
WITH ALL THE BOYS
AND YOU ENDED UP HALF TIGHT ”

“ LIQUOR AND LOVE,
IT JUST DON'T MIX,
LEAVE THE BOTTLE OR ME BEHIND ”

“ AND DON'T COME HOME A-DRINKIN'
WITH LOVIN' ON YOUR MIND ”

THAT'S HOW IT GOES.

LYNN: “ NO, DON'T COME HOME
A-DRINKIN'... ”

NARRATOR: THE SAME YEAR THAT THE
NATIONAL ORGANIZATION FOR WOMEN

WAS FOUNDED AND THE YEAR
THE PHRASE "WOMEN'S LIBERATION"

WAS FIRST USED,
"DON'T COME HOME A-DRINKIN'
WITH LOVIN' ON YOUR MIND"

BECAME LORETTA LYNN'S
FIRST NUMBER-ONE HIT.

SHE DIDN'T CONSIDER HERSELF
PART OF ANY MOVEMENT,

NOR DID HER GROWING LEGIONS
OF FEMALE COUNTRY MUSIC FANS,

BUT THEY BELIEVED THAT AT LAST,
SOMEONE WAS SPEAKING FOR THEM.

LYNN: THEY WERE GOING
THROUGH THE SAME THING.

THEY JUST KNEW THAT I WAS GOING
THROUGH THE SAME THING, TOO.

“ ...AND MANY A NIGHT
I'VE LAID AWAKE AND CRIED

HERE ALL ALONE... â€œ

THEY JUST BOUGHT THE RECORD
AND SEE THEIR HUSBAND COMING,
PUT IT ON AND TURN IT UP.

HA HA! THAT'S WHAT THEY DID.

â€œ ...SO DON'T COME HOME
A-DRINKIN' â€œ

â€œ WITH LOVIN' ON YOUR MIND

THESE WERE SOME SONGS
THAT PEOPLE WEREN'T WRITING,

AND CERTAINLY NO WOMAN WAS
WRITING SONGS LIKE THAT.

NOBODY IN ROCK AND ROLL
WAS SINGING THOSE IDEAS.

LYNN: â€œ ...ON THE TOWN AND SEE
WHAT YOU CAN FIND... â€œ

WHITE: THERE'S NOTHING
MORE FEMINIST THAN THAT.

IT'S REAL.
YOU'RE TALKING ABOUT, LIKE,
SPOUSAL ABUSE AND ALCOHOLISM,

AND, UH, A WOMAN'S
RIGHT TO HER OWN BODY
AND HER OWN RIGHTS.

I MEAN, THOSE ARE HEAVY-DUTY
TOPICS YOU THREW TOGETHER
IN THAT NOVEL LITTLE SONG.

PRETTY INCREDIBLE.

NARRATOR: AND SHE HAD MORE
TO SAY IN HER OWN FEISTY,
UNFILTERED WAY.

HER MOST CONTROVERSIAL SONG
FOCUSED ON A WIFE WHO FEELS

LIKE A HEN IN A BROODER HOUSE,
CONFINED TO AN EXISTENCE

OF HAVING ONE CHILD
AFTER ANOTHER.

LYNN: â€œ ALL THESE YEARS
I'VE STAYED AT HOME

â WHILE YOU HAD ALL YOUR FUN

â AND EVERY YEAR
THAT'S GONE BY â

â ANOTHER BABY'S COME

â THERE'S GONNA BE
SOME CHANGES MADE â

â RIGHT HERE ON NURSERY HILL

â YOU'VE SET THIS CHICKEN
YOUR LAST TIME â

â 'CAUSE NOW I'VE GOT
THE PILL â

NARRATOR: DECCA WAS WORRIED
ENOUGH ABOUT THE SONG'S TOPIC,

SUNG BY A MOTHER OF NOW 6.

IT HELD BACK "THE PILL"'S
RELEASE FOR TWO YEARS,

AND WHEN IT DID COME OUT,
A NUMBER OF COUNTRY STATIONS

REFUSED TO PLAY IT UNTIL
PUBLICITY ABOUT THE BOYCOTT--

AND DEMANDS
FROM HER FEMALE FANS--

MADE IT A TOP-5 COUNTRY HIT

AND CROSSED IT OVER
TO THE POP CHARTS.

ROSANNE CASH: I SAW
THIS PICTURE OF LORETTA.

SHE HAD A WHITE TELECASTER,

AND SHE HAD ON HER SHORT FRINGE
SKIRT AND HER COWBOY BOOTS,

YOU KNOW, SINGING "THE PILL."
I THOUGHT, "OH, MAN."

THAT WAS RAD--SHE WAS RADICAL.

SHE WAS A BADASS.

LYNN: IT WAS HAPPENING

TO EVERYBODY,

BUT NOBODY WOULD WRITE ABOUT IT.

THEY THOUGHT THEY'D
INSULT PEOPLE.

WELL, I NEVER THOUGHT ABOUT THAT
BECAUSE PEOPLE WERE LIVING
THAT KIND OF LIFE.

AND WHEN "THE PILL" CAME OUT,
YOU KNOW, WHEN I HAD "THE PILL,"

EVERYBODY WOULD LOOK AT ME
LIKE, "ANOTHER DIRTY SONG."

[CHUCKLES]
IT WASN'T DIRTY.

EVERYBODY WENT OUT
AND BOUGHT IT.

AND, IN FACT, IF THEY'D
HAVE HAD THE PILL OUT
WHEN I WAS HAVING KIDS,

I'D HAVE ATE 'EM LIKE POPCORN.

I DON'T KNOW WHERE I'D GOT
THE MONEY TO BUY 'EM, BUT I
MIGHT HAVE HAD TO STEAL 'EM.

NARRATOR: BUT HER BIGGEST
SUCCESS CAME FROM A SONG

THAT SIMPLY RECOUNTED
HER HUMBLE BEGINNINGS

IN BUTCHER HOLLER, KENTUCKY.

["COAL MINER'S DAUGHTER"
PLAYING]

LYNN: "WELL, I WAS BORN
A COAL MINER'S DAUGHTER"

"IN A CABIN, ON A HILL
IN BUTCHER HOLLER"

"WE WERE POOR,
BUT WE HAD LOVE"

"THAT'S THE ONE THING
THAT DADDY MADE SURE OF"

"HE SHOVELED COAL TO MAKE

A POOR MAN'S DOLLAR... â

KATHY MATTEA: I STUDIED
"COAL MINER'S DAUGHTER"
LIKE IT WAS A TEXTBOOK.

IT'S A ROSETTA STONE.

IT GOES BACK TO BLUEGRASS
AND MOUNTAIN MUSIC

AND COUNTRY MUSIC
AND MODERN COUNTRY.

REBA McENTIRE: LORETTA LYNN
IS HONESTY, BLUNTNESS.

SHE'LL SAY ANYTHING.
THERE'S NO FILTER.

SHE REMINDS ME OF MAMA A LOT.

UH, SHE'S A STRONG-WILLED
WOMAN AND IS A SURVIVOR.

LYNN: â WELL, A LOT
OF THINGS HAVE CHANGED
SINCE WAY BACK THEN... â

IF YOU WRITE THE TRUTH
AND YOU'RE WRITING THE SONG,

AND YOU'RE WRITING, SETTING HERE
WRITING ABOUT YOUR LIFE,

IT'S GOING TO BE COUNTRY.
IT'LL BE COUNTRY...

'CAUSE YOU'RE WRITING
WHAT'S HAPPENING,

AND THAT'S ALL A GOOD SONG IS.

â ...EXCEPT THE MEMORIES OF
A COAL MINER'S DAUGHTER â

[CHEERING AND APPLAUSE]

PETE SEEGER:
â WE SHALL OVERCOME

â WE SHALL OVERCOME

â WE SHALL OVERCOME SOMEDAY...

NARRATOR: BY THE MID-1960s,

THE LONG STRUGGLE
BY AFRICAN AMERICANS

TO END LEGALIZED DISCRIMINATION
IN THE SOUTH

WAS FINALLY
PRODUCING VICTORIES.

SCHOOLS COULD NO LONGER
BE SEGREGATED.

THE HARD-WON
CIVIL RIGHTS ACT OF 1964

BANNED EMPLOYERS
AND PUBLIC PLACES

FROM DENYING THEM JOBS
OR PROVIDING THEM EQUAL ACCESS

TO EVERYTHING FROM
DRINKING FOUNTAINS

TO SEATS IN CAFETERIAS
OR ON A BUS.

AND IN 1965,
PRESIDENT LYNDON JOHNSON

SIGNED A BILL
OVERRIDING STATE LAWS

MEANT TO KEEP BLACK PEOPLE FROM
EXERCISING THEIR RIGHT TO VOTE.

THAT FALL, IN NASHVILLE,

A 31-YEAR-OLD FROM
SLEDGE, MISSISSIPPI

WITH A DEEP, RESONANT VOICE

ENTERED A STUDIO TO RECORD

SOME COUNTRY SONGS
FOR THE FIRST TIME.

HIS NAME WAS CHARLEY PRIDE.

MY DAD USED TO SAY,
NOW, "PRIDE.

JUST THINK ABOUT
THE NAME ITSELF."

HE SAID, "WHATEVER YOU WANT

TO DO, YOU WANT TO TRY

TO DO IT GOOD AND DO IT QUICK."

PRIDE: â€œ SO I FEEL SO BLUE
SOMETIMES I WANNA DIE â€œ

RUCKER: THE REASON HE WAS ABLE
TO MAKE IT IN COUNTRY MUSIC

WAS BECAUSE OF HIS VOICE.

YOU KNOW, EVENTUALLY,
IT DIDN'T MATTER

WHAT THE COLOR OF HIS SKIN WAS

'CAUSE HIS MUSIC
WAS WAY TOO GOOD.

NARRATOR: HE WAS BORN IN 1934,

THE FOURTH OF 11 CHILDREN
IN A SHARECROPPER'S FAMILY

THAT LIVED IN A 3-ROOM
SHOTGUN SHACK

IN THE MISSISSIPPI DELTA.

PRIDE: I GREW UP AND WALKED
4 MILES TO SCHOOL,

4 MILES BACK,
THAT KIND OF THING.

BUT THE WHITES HAD A BUS.

WE DIDN'T HAVE A BUS.

I'M WALKING TO SCHOOL,
I WALKED WAY OVER TO THE SIDE

'CAUSE THEY HAD POTHOLES
AND IT WAS A GRAVEL ROAD.

IF YOU'RE WALKING TOO CLOSE
AND THE BUS GO BY,

AND [MIMICS SOUND]...IT WENT--
WATER ALL OVER ME, SEE?

PLUS THE KIDS SAID,
"HEY, NIGGER. HEY..."

YOU KNOW, GIVING--TAUNTIN' YOU
AND THAT SORT OF THING.

I ALWAYS WANTED BE SOMEWHERE
AND DO SOMETHING DIFFERENT

THAN PICKING COTTON
BESIDE MY DAD.

I USED TO SIT ON THE PORCH
AND I'D LOOK UP AT THE CLOUDS.

AND I SAID, "BOY, I'D BE--
TO FLOAT ON THEM CLOUDS."

AND I'D THINK OF THAT,
YOU KNOW, WHEN I WAS LITTLE.

I DIDN'T REALIZE
WHAT IT WOULD BE.

SO WHEN I SAW JACKIE ROBINSON GO
TO THE MAJOR LEAGUES, I SAID,

"THERE'S MY OUT OF
THE COTTON FIELD."

[CROWD CHEERING]

NARRATOR: HIS ABILITY AS
A PITCHER LANDED HIM A SPOT

ON THE MEMPHIS RED SOX
IN THE NEGRO LEAGUE

WHEN PRIDE WAS
STILL A TEENAGER.

HE LATER MOVED
TO HELENA, MONTANA,

WHERE HE PLAYED ON
A MINOR LEAGUE TEAM

AND WORKED IN A SMELTING PLANT.

BUT HE HAD ALSO GROWN UP
LISTENING TO THE GRAND OLE OPRY,

ADMIRING HANK WILLIAMS,
AND IN MONTANA,

HE BEGAN PERFORMING
IN A LOCAL BAR.

PASSING THROUGH TOWN, OPRY STARS
RED FOLEY AND RED SOVINE

HEARD HIM SINGING WILLIAMS'

"LOVESICK BLUES,"

AND WERE IMPRESSED ENOUGH TO
ENCOURAGE HIM TO TRY NASHVILLE.

PRIDE SHOWED UP IN MUSIC CITY,
WHERE HE CAUGHT THE ATTENTION OF

COWBOY JACK CLEMENT,

THE MAVERICK PRODUCER
AND SONGWRITER.

MAN: I THOUGHT COUNTRY MUSIC WAS

GETTING A LITTLE STALE
AT THAT TIME.

AND I THOUGHT IT NEEDED
SOME...KICK IN THE BUTT.

OR SOMETHING.

AND A FRIEND OF MINE
WAS TELLING ME ABOUT THIS, UH,

"NEGRO" THAT WAS
A GREAT COUNTRY SINGER.

EMERY: IF ANY PRODUCER
SHOULD HAVE TAKEN ON

A BLACK KID, IT WAS JACK

'CAUSE JACK LIKED
TO BE DIFFERENT.

AND JACK WASN'T
AFRAID OF ANYTHING.

CLEMENT: WELL, I HEARD HIM SING
AND HE WAS GREAT.

AND I CAME BACK AND I SAID,
"LET'S GET HIM IN HERE

AND RECORD HIM."

[APPLAUSE]

NARRATOR: MEANWHILE,
PRIDE'S MANAGER STARTED MAKING

INTRODUCTIONS TO OTHER PEOPLE
IN THE BUSINESS,

PEOPLE WHO COULD MAKE

PRIDE'S LIFE EASY

OR VERY DIFFICULT.

â€œ ...THINGS GO
FOR YOU TODAY? â€œ

PRIDE: HE SAID, "NOW,
THERE'S GOING TO BE

SOME PEOPLE IN NASHVILLE
THAT YOU'VE GOT TO GET BY."

I SAID, "OK."

AND THE FIRST NAME HE NAMED
WAS FARON YOUNG.

AND HE SAID, "FARON'S
JUST SUBJECT TO--

"WALK UP TO YOU AND SAY,
'YOU'RE THAT N-WORD

THAT'S TRYING TO SING MUSIC.'"

EMERY: FARON, BEING
ONE OF THE MOST OUTSPOKEN,

CONTROVERSIAL PEOPLE
IN NASHVILLE...

â€œ WELL, I SEE
THAT YOU'RE STILL HERE â€œ

PEOPLE LISTENED TO FARON.
PEOPLE RESPECTED FARON.

PEOPLE WERE AFRAID OF FARON.

I SAID, "LET'S GO FIND HIM."
"HUH?"

I SAID, "MIGHT AS WELL
GET IT OVER WITH RIGHT NOW."

NARRATOR: THEY TRACKED DOWN
FARON YOUNG

AT ONE OF HIS FAVORITE CLUBS.

"FARON, I WANT YOU
TO MEET CHARLEY PRIDE."

HIS SHOULDERS WENT LIKE THAT.

I SAID, "UH-OH, HERE IT COMES."

HE GOT UP AND HE SAYS,
"CHARLEY PRIDE,

YOU SING A FINE SONG."

I SAID, "FARON,
YOU DO YOURSELF."

BUT HE WOULD SING ONE,
AND I WOULD SING ONE.

HE WOULD SING ONE,
AND I WOULD SING ONE.

AND, FINALLY, HE SAID,
"WELL, I'LL BE.

"WHO WOULD HAVE EVER THOUGHT
I'M SITTING HERE

SINGING WITH A JIG
AND DON'T MIND."

NARRATOR: BUT MOST OF
THE LABELS IN NASHVILLE

WEREN'T INTERESTED
IN SIGNING HIM.

THEN, CHET ATKINS TOOK THE TAPES
TO HIS BOSSES AT RCA--

WAITING UNTIL THEY
LIKED WHAT THEY HEARD

BEFORE SHOWING THEM
A PHOTOGRAPH OF PRIDE.

THEY DECIDED TO RELEASE
HIS EARLY SINGLES

WITHOUT MAKING ANY MENTION
OF PRIDE'S RACE.

MANY OF THE RADIO DISC JOCKEYS--
AND THE PEOPLE LISTENING--

ASSUMED HE WAS JUST ANOTHER
WHITE, SOUTHERN COUNTRY SINGER.

EMERY: I WAS EMCEEING
A SHOW IN DETROIT.

WE HAD ABOUT 18,000 PEOPLE,
AND WHEN I WENT OUT, I SAID,

"HOW MANY PEOPLE HERE
ARE FROM THE SOUTH?

FIRST, SECOND,
THIRD GENERATION?"

MOST OF THE HANDS WENT UP.

PRIDE WAS ABOUT
THE THIRD ACT ON.

SO I GAVE HIM A BIG BUILDUP,
BEING THERE FROM

"DOWN IN MISSISSIPPI,"
AND ALL OF THAT.

AND "I HOPE YOU'LL GIVE HIM
A BIG DETROIT WELCOME.

COUNTRY CHARLEY PRIDE."

[CHEERING AND APPLAUSE]

WELL, THIS IS EXACTLY
THE WAY IT WENT.

"YEAH!"

IT STOPPED.

[MIMICS SOUND DROPPING]
LIKE TURNING DOWN A--A VOLUME.

[MIMICS WHISPERING]
YOU COULD DROP A PIN.

I SAID, "LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,

"I REALIZE IT'S KIND OF UNIQUE,

"ME COMING OUT HERE
ON A COUNTRY MUSIC SHOW

WEARING THIS PERMANENT TAN."

[LAUGHTER AND APPLAUSE]

THE MINUTE I SAID THAT,
A BIG APPLAUSE.

[MIMICS APPLAUSE]

SO I GUESS THEY SAID, "WELL,

LET'S SIT BACK, SEE
WHAT HE GOT TO OFFER."

â

â I THOUGHT I HAD SEEN
PRETTY GIRLS IN MY TIME â

â BUT THAT WAS
BEFORE I MET YOU â

â I NEVER SAW ONE
THAT I WANTED FOR MINE â

â BUT THAT WAS
BEFORE I MET YOU â

â I THOUGHT...

BUT ONCE THEY SAW ME SING
AND HEARD ME SING,

THEY DIDN'T SAY THIS, BUT
"I DON'T CARE IF HE'S GREEN.

I LIKE HIS SINGING."

NARRATOR: BUT AT
A CONVENTION IN NASHVILLE,

A VISITING DISC JOCKEY
TOLD FARON YOUNG

THAT WHEN THEY LEARNED
CHARLEY PRIDE WAS BLACK,

THE STATION DECIDED
TO STOP PLAYING HIS RECORDS.

YOUNG SET THE MAN STRAIGHT.

EMERY: "YOU SON OF A BITCH,
YOU GO BACK THERE

"AND TELL THAT SON OF A BITCH
THAT MANAGES YOUR STATION

IF HE TAKES CHARLEY PRIDE OFF,
TAKE ALL MY RECORDS OFF."

NARRATOR: WHEN HIS SINGLE,
"JUST BETWEEN YOU AND ME,"

REACHED NUMBER 10
ON THE COUNTRY CHARTS,

CHARLEY PRIDE'S CAREER
WAS LAUNCHED,

THOUGH, FOR A WHILE, HIS LABEL
WAS STILL SKITTISH

ABOUT WHICH SONGS HE RECORDED--
ESPECIALLY LOVE SONGS.

THEY TURNED DOWN HIS REQUEST
TO SING CURLY PUTMAN'S

"GREEN, GREEN GRASS OF HOME."

PRIDE: "DOWN THE ROAD I LOOK

"AND THERE COMES MARY,
HAIR OF GOLD"

"HAIR OF GOLD"?

"AND LIPS LIKE CHERRIES

"HAIR OF GOLD"?

DID THAT GET YOU GOOD ENOUGH?

THEY THOUGHT THAT WAS
JUST...THAT ONE LINE

MIGHT JUST WOULD HURT THE...
"LOOK WHO HE'S SINGING TO."

THERE AIN'T GOT
THAT MANY "HAIR OF GOLDS"

THAT'S HIS COLOR.

RIGHT?

NARRATOR: BUT HIS BIGGEST HIT,
"KISS AN ANGEL GOOD MORNING,"

SPENT 5 WEEKS AT THE TOP
OF THE COUNTRY CHARTS

AND CROSSED OVER
TO THE POP MARKETS.

PRIDE: "OLD FRIENDS
ON THE STREET"

"THEY WONDER HOW DOES A MAN
GET TO BE THIS WAY"

NARRATOR: HE WOULD BECOME
THE FIRST BLACK MEMBER

OF THE GRAND OLE OPRY

SINCE DEFORD BAILEY
DECADES EARLIER;

THE FIRST BLACK ARTIST TO HAVE
A NUMBER-ONE COUNTRY RECORD;

AND THE FIRST ARTIST
OF ANY COLOR

TO WIN THE COUNTRY MUSIC
ASSOCIATION'S

MALE VOCALIST AWARD
TWO YEARS IN A ROW.

TIMES WERE CHANGING.

OTHER AWARDS WOULD FOLLOW.

THE NOMINEE
FOR THE BEST
COUNTRY VOCAL...

LYNN: I WAS GIVING
THE AWARD OUT.

THEY TOLD ME IF CHARLEY WINS,
STEP BACK ONE STEP.

AND THE WINNER
IS "CHARLEY PRIDE

YEAH.
SINGS HEART SONGS"
BY CHARLEY PRIDE.

[CHEERING AND APPLAUSE]

SO I HUGGED HIM.

PRIDE: â€œ THE SECRET
OF A HAPPINESS â€œ

â€œ BUT SOME OF THEM...

YOU CAN'T LET PEOPLE TELL YOU
WHERE TO STAND AND WHAT TO SAY.

OR I NEVER COULD.

PRIDE: â€œ THE SECRET
I'M SPEAKING OF â€œ

NARRATOR: CHARLEY PRIDE
WOULD GO ON TO HAVE

29 NUMBER-ONE COUNTRY HITS

AND 12 GOLD ALBUMS,

BE INDUCTED INTO THE COUNTRY
MUSIC HALL OF FAME,

AND REMAIN A LIFELONG FRIEND
OF FARON YOUNG.

WE WENT INTO THE COUNTRY MUSIC
HALL OF FAME TOGETHER.

FARON YOUNG, ONE OF MY BEST,
BEST FRIENDS THERE EVER WAS.

â€œ ...DEVIL WHEN YOU
GET BACK HOME â€œ

MAN: THE THING ABOUT
DEFORD BAILEY, RAY CHARLES,

AND CHARLEY PRIDE,
THE 2 OR 3 BLACK PEOPLE

WHO WERE KNOWN TO BE
IN COUNTRY MUSIC,

THEY WERE ACCEPTED.

THE MUSICIANS ACCEPTED THEM
AT A TIME

WHEN THE CULTURE
DID NOT ACCEPT.

THERE'S A TRUTH IN THE MUSIC.

AND IT'S TOO BAD
THAT WE, AS A CULTURE,

HAVE NOT BEEN ABLE
TO ADDRESS THAT TRUTH.

THAT'S THE SHAME OF IT.

THE ART TELLS MORE OF THE TALE
OF US COMING TOGETHER.

HAGGARD: â€œ A CANVAS
COVERED CABIN â€œ

â€œ IN A CROWDED LABOR CAMP

â€œ STAND OUT IN THIS MEMORY
I REVIVED â€œ

â€œ 'CAUSE MY DADDY RAISED
A FAMILY THERE â€œ

â€” WITH TWO HARD-WORKING HANDS

â€” AND TRIED TO FEED
MY MAMA'S HUNGRY EYES â€”

THE HUMAN BEING HAS
A HISTORY OF BEING AWFUL CRUEL

TO SOME--SOMETHING DIFFERENT.

"OKIE" WAS NOT A--NOT
A GOOD WORD, YOU KNOW?

THEY WERE TALKED DOWN TO
AND LOOKED DOWN ON,

AND IT MIGHT HAVE BEEN
SOMETHING COMPARABLE

TO THE WAY THAT THEY
TREATED THE BLACKS.

NARRATOR: WHEN MERLE RONALD
HAGGARD WAS BORN IN 1937,

HIS FAMILY HAD
ALREADY BEEN LIVING

NEAR BAKERSFIELD, CALIFORNIA
FOR 3 YEARS--

HAVING FLED OKLAHOMA AFTER
A FIRE DESTROYED THEIR FARM

DURING THE DEPRESSION.

THEY WERE STILL
LOOKED DOWN UPON AS "OKIES."

HAGGARD: â€” ...HAD THE LUXURIES
SHE WANTED â€”

NARRATOR: HAGGARD'S FATHER
HAD FOUND WORK ON THE RAILROAD,

BUT THEY NEEDED
A PERMANENT PLACE TO LIVE.

THERE WAS A LADY
NAMED "MISS BONA,"

WHO OWNED A--A LOT WITH
A BOXCAR SETTING ON IT,

REFRIGERATOR CAR,
AND SHE SAID, UH...

"IF YOU HAVE A MIND TO BE
A HARD ENOUGH WORKER,

YOU COULD PROBABLY MAKE THIS
INTO A PRETTY NICE HOME,"

SHE SAID, "BUT I NEVER HEARD OF
AN OKIE THAT WOULD WORK."

AND MY DAD TOOK A LITTLE OFFENSE
TO THAT AND HE SAID,

"WELL, MA'AM, I NEVER HEARD OF
ONE THAT WOULDN'T WORK."

NARRATOR: HAGGARD WAS
ONLY 9 YEARS OLD

WHEN HIS FATHER
DIED FROM A STROKE.

"SOMETHING," HE SAID LATER,
"WENT OUT OF THE WORLD

THAT I WAS NEVER
ABLE TO REPLACE."

TO FILL THE GAP, HIS MOTHER
ENCOURAGED MERLE'S

BUDDING INTEREST IN MUSIC,

HOPING IT WOULD KEEP HIM
OUT OF TROUBLE.

IT DIDN'T.

HE RAN AWAY FOR A WHILE
AT AGE 10

BY HOPPING A FREIGHT TRAIN,

THEN RAN AWAY AGAIN AT 14,

HITCHHIKING ALL THE WAY
TO TEXAS AND BACK.

HIS FRESHMAN YEAR
IN HIGH SCHOOL,

HE SHOWED UP A TOTAL
OF 10 DAYS.

HAGGARD: 10 YEARS AGO

NARRATOR: BUT HE

LISTENED ENDLESSLY

TO THE JIMMIE RODGERS RECORDS
HIS MOTHER BOUGHT HIM;

SNEAKED OFF TO SEE
BOB WILLIS PERFORM;

TOOK IN LOCAL CONCERTS BY
THE MADDOX BROTHERS AND ROSE

AND HIS PERSONAL HERO,
LEFTY FRIZZELL,

WHO LET HIM
COME ONSTAGE AT AGE 16

AND DO AN UNCANNY IMITATION
OF THE HONKY-TONK STAR.

"LEFTY," HE SAID, "GAVE ME
THE COURAGE TO DREAM."

HAGGARD SPENT MOST
OF HIS TEENAGE YEARS

RUNNING FROM THE LAW.

HE WAS CONSTANTLY
ARRESTED FOR TRUANCY--

AND JUST AS CONSTANTLY ESCAPING
FROM JUVENILE DETENTION CENTERS.

MARRIED AT AGE 17, HE STARTED
SELLING STOLEN SCRAP IRON,

GOT CAUGHT, AND WAS JAILED,
ONLY TO ESCAPE AGAIN.

[CHUCKLES]

SOMEBODY WAS ALWAYS
AFTER ME, SEEMED LIKE.

I ESCAPED 17 TIMES FROM
DIFFERENT PLACES IN CALIFORNIA.

I WAS, UH, BONNIE AND CLYDE
ALL ROLLED INTO ONE,

JUST RUNNING FROM THE LAW,
DOING TIME WHEN THEY'D CATCH ME.

NARRATOR: IN 1957,
THE POLICE BROUGHT HIM IN

FOR A MINOR BURGLARY.

THIS TIME, BASED ON
HIS RAP SHEET OF ESCAPES,

MORE THAN THE SEVERITY
OF ANY OF HIS CRIMES,

HE WAS SENTENCED TO 15 YEARS
IN SAN QUENTIN,

A MAXIMUM-SECURITY PRISON.

NO ONE HAD ESCAPED FROM IT
IN 8 YEARS.

MERLE HAGGARD BECAME
PRISONER NUMBER A-45200,

CONFINED WITH SEVERAL THOUSAND
OF CALIFORNIA'S

MOST HARDENED CRIMINALS,
SOME OF THEM ON DEATH ROW.

HE WAS 20 YEARS OLD AND INTENT
AS EVER ON BREAKING OUT.

AN INMATE EVERYONE
CALLED RABBIT

INVITED HAGGARD TO JOIN IN
ON AN ESCAPE HE WAS PLOTTING,

BUT AT THE LAST MINUTE
ADVISED THE YOUNG MAN

NOT TO TAKE PART
IN THE DANGEROUS PLAN.

"YOU CAN SING AND WRITE SONGS,"
HE TOLD HAGGARD.

"YOU CAN BE SOMEBODY SOMEDAY."

IT WAS A BIG DECISION
TO NOT GO.

BUT IT WAS KIND OF NEAT
TO KNOW THAT

I COULD GET OUT OF THERE
IF I WANTED TO.

NARRATOR:
HAGGARD TOOK THE ADVICE.

RABBIT'S ESCAPE WAS SUCCESSFUL
FOR A TIME.

BUT DURING HIS RECAPTURE,
HE KILLED A POLICEMAN,

WAS BROUGHT BACK
TO SAN QUENTIN,

AND LATER EXECUTED.

HAGGARD: SAN QUENTIN.

SOMETHING HAPPENED TO ME THERE.

THERE WAS A TIME WHERE I--I CAME
TO THE FORK IN THE ROAD

AND TOOK IT, YOU MIGHT SAY.

AND I KIND OF STARTED BACK
IN THE OTHER DIRECTION,

TRYING TO MAKE SOMETHING
OUT OF MYSELF

RATHER THAN TO DIG MYSELF
IN A DEEPER HOLE.

â€” GROWING UP TO RIDE

â€” ON A FREIGHT TRAIN
LEAVING TOWN â€”

â€” NOT KNOWING
WHERE I'M BOUND... â€”

NARRATOR: HAGGARD DECIDED
THAT HIS ONLY WAY OUT

WAS TO BECOME A MODEL PRISONER.

HE VOLUNTEERED FOR THE TOUGHEST
JOB, IN THE TEXTILE MILL,

AND PLAYED IN THE PRISON BAND.

ONE NEW YEAR'S DAY, HE ATTENDED
A CONCERT FOR THE INMATES.

THE PERFORMER WAS JOHNNY CASH,

AND HAGGARD
BECAME INSPIRED THAT

SOMEDAY HE, TOO,
MIGHT BE A STAR.

HAGGARD: "I TURNED 21
IN PRISON"

NARRATOR: "I WOULD HAVE BEEN
A CAREER CRIMINAL

AND DIED YOUNG," HE REMEMBERED,
"IF MUSIC HADN'T SAVED ME."

HAGGARD: "MAMA TRIED, MAMA
TRIED TO RAISE ME BETTER"

NARRATOR: HIS WIFE HAD STOPPED
VISITING, EVEN WRITING,

BUT HIS MOTHER
NEVER GAVE UP ON HIM.

WE'VE ALL GOT A MAMA.

AND, YOU KNOW,
THE MAJORITY OF THEM TRIED.

MY MOTHER WAS A CHRISTIAN LADY,
RAISED ME IN A CHURCH.

SHE LIVED WHAT SHE BELIEVED IN.

BUT SHE WAS NEVER TOO GOOD TO
COME AND SEE ME IN SAN QUENTIN.

RODE A GREYHOUND BUS UP THERE

EVERY TIME SHE COULD
AFFORD TO COME.

AND I WAS THE ONLY ONE,
AM THE ONLY ONE,

IN OUR WHOLE FAMILY
TO HAVE EVER BEEN TO JAIL.

SO SHE HAD A LOT OF GUFF FROM

THE REST OF THE FAMILY,
I'M SURE.

AND, UH, IT WAS GOOD WHEN
I STARTED GETTING POPULAR

BECAUSE SHE KIND OF
GOT BACK AT THEM.

NARRATOR: PAROLED AFTER
2 1/2 YEARS,

HE RETURNED TO BAKERSFIELD

AND TOOK A DAY JOB
DIGGING DITCHES.

7 NIGHTS A WEEK, HE PLAYED MUSIC
IN THE CITY'S HONKY-TONKS:

THE HIGH POCKETS,
RAINBOW GARDENS, THE LUCKY SPOT.

HE TOURED BRIEFLY
WITH BUCK OWENS,

PLAYING BASS
WITH THE BUCKAROOS.

IN 1965, HE MARRIED
THE SINGER BONNIE OWENS,

BUCK'S FORMER WIFE,
AND RECORDED DUETS WITH HER.

THEN HAGGARD'S SOLO CAREER

STARTED PICKING UP STEAM
ON ITS OWN.

SOME OF THE SONGS HE WROTE--

"SWINGING DOORS"
AND "THE BOTTLE LET ME DOWN"--

WERE CLASSIC HONKY-TONK TUNES
WITH A BAKERSFIELD SOUND.

BUT INCREASINGLY,
HE TURNED TO THEMES

REFLECTING HIS OWN EXPERIENCES:

"SING ME BACK HOME,"
DRAWN FROM HIS TIME IN PRISON;

"MAMA TRIED," ABOUT HIS RECKLESS
YOUNGER YEARS;

AND "HUNGRY EYES,"
ABOUT GROWING UP POOR.

PEOPLE STARTED CALLING HIM
THE POET OF THE COMMON MAN.

YOAKAM: THE SONG THAT CAPTURES
THAT PART OF AMERICAN HISTORY

AND AMERICAN COUNTRY MUSIC

HISTORY, BY MERLE, TO ME,

IS "MAMA'S HUNGRY EYES."

â A CANVAS-COVERED CABIN
IN A CROWDED LABOR CAMP â

â STAND OUT IN THIS
OLD MEMORY I REVIVE â

â 'CAUSE MY DADDY
RAISED A FAMILY THERE â

â WITH TWO HARD-WORKING HANDS

â AND TRIED TO FILL
MY MAMA'S HUNGRY EYES â

IN THE SECOND VERSE OF THAT
SONG, HE SINGS ABOUT IT,

"ANOTHER CLASS OF PEOPLE KEPT US
SOMEWHERE JUST BELOW.

ONE MORE REASON FOR
MY MAMA'S HUNGRY EYES."

HE SANG THAT FOR BUCK
AND BUCK'S FAMILY,

THE MADDUX BROTHERS,
AND ALL THOSE UNNAMED

"OKIES" AND "ARKIES"
AND TEXANS.

MERLE HAGGARD IS ONE OF
THE GREATEST POETS EVER

IN AMERICAN MUSIC,
INDEPENDENT OF--OF GENRE.

NARRATOR: DURING A 3-YEAR
STRETCH IN THE LATE 1960s,

HE PUT OUT A NUMBER-ONE HIT
EVERY 4 MONTHS.

EMERY: THE FIRST THING
WE NOTICED ABOUT HIM, WELL,

HE--HE WAS HOLLYWOOD HANDSOME.

I HAD GIRLS STOP ME
ON THE STREET

ASKING ME HOW TO MEET

MERLE HAGGARD.

STEWARDESSES ON AIRPLANES SAID,
"YOU KNOW MERLE HAGGARD?"

HE WAS HANDSOME,
HE COULD SING,

AND HE COULD WRITE.

HE--HE WAS THE TOTAL PACKAGE.

HAGGARD: "A ...BEER IN A TAVERN

"A SING A LITTLE BIT
OF THESE WORKIN' MAN BLUES "A

MAN: FOR ME,
COUNTRY MUSIC WAS DEAD.

I HAD SPENT MY EARLY TIME,
IN THE SIXTIES,

LISTENING TO MOTOWN.

I THOUGHT THAT STUFF
THEY WERE DOING AT MOTOWN--

"PAPA WAS A ROLLING STONE"
AND ALL THAT GOOD STUFF--

MAN, WHAT DO YOU MEAN
COUNTRY MUSIC?

HAGGARD: "A I'LL DRINK
A LITTLE BEER THAT EVENING "A

MILSAP: THEN,
ONE NIGHT, IN ATLANTA,

I WAS UP LATE WITH A RADIO

AND HEARD A SONG
BY MERLE HAGGARD...

HAGGARD: "A SOMETIMES
I THINK ABOUT LEAVING "A

MILSAP: AND I THINK
FOR ME, JUST

MERLE HAGGARD, ALL BY HIMSELF,
SAVED COUNTRY MUSIC.

HARRIS: "WELL, WHAT IS
COUNTRY MUSIC?"

I WOULD SAY, "OK, JUST GET
ANY MERLE HAGGARD RECORD.

"YOU KNOW, IT DOESN'T MATTER
WHICH ONE.

"JUST DROP THE NEEDLE
ON ANY TRACK

"AND THIS WILL GIVE YOU AN IDEA.

AND--AND YOU CAN
TAKE IT FROM THERE."

HAGGARD: "I TODAY I STARTED
LOVING YOU AGAIN I"

HAGGARD: BONNIE AND I
HAD BEEN ON TOUR

FOR 93 STRAIGHT DAYS
WITHOUT A BREAK.

"I I'M RIGHT BACK
WHERE I'VE REALLY
ALWAYS BEEN I"

WE WERE IN THE L.A.
INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT.

AND I TOLD HER, "TODAY,
I STARTED LOVING YOU AGAIN."

" JUST LONG ENOUGH

"HAD TIME TO TELL YOU ABOUT IT."

AND THAT'S WHERE IT CAME FROM.

" THEN TODAY,
I STARTED
LOVING YOU... "

IT'S A CIRCLE.

A CIRCLE OF WORDS
THAT SURROUND A SUBJECT,

BEST WAY TO DESCRIBE IT.

" WHAT A FOOL
I WAS "

IT'S BEEN RECORDED ALMOST--
ALMOST 500 TIMES

BY SOME OF THE GREATER ARTISTS

IN THE BUSINESS,

SO I'M AWFULLY PROUD
OF THAT COPYRIGHT.

NARRATOR: "I FELT LIKE I WAS
ON A ROLL," HAGGARD RECALLED,

"BUT I COULDN'T HELP BUT WONDER
WHAT WOULD HAPPEN

"TO MY LITTLE, GROWING PUBLIC IF
THEY FOUND OUT

"I WAS A SAN QUENTIN GRADUATE.

MAMA EVEN SUGGESTED
I CHANGE MY NAME."

HE DECIDED TO STICK
WITH HAGGARD.

"IT WAS MY DADDY'S," HE SAID,
"AND IT'S MINE."

YOAKAM: MY FAVORITE SONG
OF MERLE'S IS

"HOLDING THINGS TOGETHER."

IT'S CHRONICLING A FAMILY
WHO'S BROKEN APART.

AND, IN THIS CASE, IT'S NOT

THE FATHER WHO'S LEFT,
IT'S THE MOTHER WHO LEFT.

AND THE FATHER'S LEFT THERE
TO HOLD THE FAMILY TOGETHER.

â HOLDING THINGS TOGETHER
AIN'T NO EASY THING TO DO â

â WHEN IT COMES TO
RAISING CHILDREN â

â IT'S A JOB MEANT FOR TWO

â ALICE, PLEASE BELIEVE ME,
I CAN'T GO ON AND ON â

â HOLDING THINGS TOGETHER
WITH YOU GONE â

HE SINGS, "TODAY WAS
ANGIE'S BIRTHDAY.

IT MUST HAVE
SLIPPED YOUR MIND."

MERLE'S GOOD.

HE SAYS, "I TRIED
TWICE TO CALL YOU..."

"WITH NO ANSWER EITHER TIME.

"BUT THE POSTMAN
BROUGHT A PACKAGE

I MAILED SOME DAYS AGO."

"I SIGNED IT 'LOVE FROM MAMA,'
SO ANGIE WOULDN'T KNOW."

YOU DON'T HAVE TO SAY ANYTHING
MORE ABOUT MERLE HAGGARD.

[APPLAUSE]

[MUSIC PLAYING]

â€

â€ IF I TALK TO HIM

â€ I TAKE HIM BACK AGAIN

[APPLAUSE]

â€ SO IF HE CALLS, PLEASE
TELL HIM I'M NOT HOME â€

McENTIRE: THOSE DAYS,
MEN WERE THE HEADLINERS.

MEN WERE SELLING THE RECORDS,

AND WOMEN WERE
THE OPENING ACTS,

AND WOMEN WERE KIND OF LIKE
"THE GIRL SINGER IN THE BAND."

THE "TOKEN" GIRL SINGER.
AND THAT WAS A TRUTH.

BUT SOME WOMEN
CHANGED SOME THINGS,

AND THAT'S GOOD.

NARRATOR: OTHER FEMALE ARTISTS

WERE FOLLOWING

IN LORETTA LYNN'S WAKE.

“YES, IF I TALK TO HIM,
I TAKE HIM...”

NARRATOR: CONNIE SMITH
HAD GROWN UP IN OHIO,

PAINFULLY SHY BUT POSSESSING

AN EXTRAORDINARILY
POWERFUL VOICE.

BILL ANDERSON HEARD IT
FOR THE FIRST TIME IN 1963

AT THE FRONTIER RANCH MUSIC PARK
OUTSIDE COLUMBUS,

WHEN SHE WAS 22 AND TAKING PART
IN A TALENT CONTEST

THAT HE WAS ASKED TO JUDGE.

ANDERSON: I REMEMBER
I HAD A--A LEGAL PAD

AND A PEN THEY GAVE ME
TO SIT DOWN

AND MAKE NOTES, YOU KNOW,
OF ALL THE PEOPLE.

AND I SAW 2 OR 3 PEOPLE COME OUT
ONSTAGE AND THEY WERE GOOD.

YOU KNOW, THERE WASN'T ANY
BAD PERFORMERS ON THE STAGE.

BUT ALL OF A SUDDEN,
I LOOKED UP

AND HERE CAME THIS
LITTLE, BITTY GIRL

WITH A GUITAR AS BIG OR BIGGER
THAN SHE WAS

AND A LITTLE HOMEMADE DRESS,
LITTLE WHITE DRESS;

BEAUTIFUL, LONG, BLONDE HAIR
AND I THOUGHT,

"THAT'S A BEAUTIFUL,

LITTLE GIRL."

AND SHE STARTED SINGING.

I ACTUALLY THOUGHT
SHE WAS PANTOMIMING A RECORD.

I HAD NEVER HEARD
A VOICE THAT BIG

COME OUT OF
SOMEBODY THAT SMALL.

I THOUGHT, "GOODNESS GRACIOUS."

THE TALENT CONTEST WAS OVER
WHEN SHE OPENED HER MOUTH.

SMITH: "WHEN YOU FOUND
SOMEBODY NEW, I THOUGHT I..."

NARRATOR:
ANDERSON PERSUADED SMITH

TO COME TO NASHVILLE IN 1964,

WHERE SHE RECORDED A SONG HE HAD
WRITTEN ENTITLED "ONCE A DAY,"

AND SHE APPEARED ON
ERNEST TUBB'S MIDNITE JAMBOREE.

SMITH: HE TOOK ME
THROUGH TOOTSIE'S

AND TOOK ME TO THE RECORD SHOP,
AND I GOT TO MEET

GRANT TURNER, ERNEST TUBB,
AND THIS LITTLE LADY,

LITTLE, PREGNANT LADY
SITTING BACKSTAGE,

SENT HER HUSBAND UP, SAID,
"DOO, GO GET CONNIE.

I WANT TO MEET HER."

AND LORETTA WAS
SITTING BACK THERE.

IT WAS JUST RIGHT BEFORE
SHE HAD THE TWINS.

AND, UH, DOO TOOK ME BACK
AND I GOT TO MEET LORETTA.

AND SHE TOLD ME, SHE SAID,
"NOW, PATSY DID THIS FOR ME

AND I'M GOING TO
DO IT FOR YOU."

AND SHE TOLD ME WHAT TO EXPECT
OUT OF NASHVILLE,

WHO TO WATCH OUT FOR AND WHO
TO WATCH FOR, AND ALL THAT.

AND, UH, SO, WE BECAME FRIENDS
THE VERY FIRST DAY WE MET.

â€â€ ONCE A DAY EVERY DAY
ALL DAY LONG â€â€

STUART: MY MOTHER'S FAVORITE
FEMALE COUNTRY SINGER

WAS CONNIE SMITH.

MY MAMA LOVED THE POWER
IN CONNIE'S VOICE

AND THE AUTHENTICITY
OF HER SINGING.

AND WE HAD A RECORD
AT OUR HOUSE CALLED

"MISS SMITH GOES TO NASHVILLE."

I'D SET IT UP ON THE STEREO
AND I'D PASS BY IT

AND LOOK AT IT, AND IT WAS LIKE

LOOKING AT THE "MONA LISA"
OR SOMETHING.

I THOUGHT, "THAT'S THE PRETTIEST
GIRL I'VE EVER SEEN."

AND ONE DAY, OUR LOCAL ANNOUNCER
ANNOUNCED THAT MISS CONNIE SMITH

WAS GOING TO BE THE GUEST STAR
ON THE SATURDAY NIGHT SHOW

AT THE CHOCTAW INDIAN FAIR
IN PHILADELPHIA, MISSISSIPPI.

I WENT BLAZING THROUGH THE HOUSE
TO TELL MAMA.

SO MY MOTHER, MY SISTER
JENNIFER, AND I

WENT TO SEE CONNIE
AT THE CHOCTAW INDIAN FAIR,

ON THE FOOTBALL FIELD.

AND WHEN SHE
STEPPED OUT ONSTAGE,

SHE WAS
BREATH TAKINGLY BEAUTIFUL,

WEARING A BLUE SPARKLE DRESS.

AND I GOT MY PICTURE
MADE WITH HER THAT NIGHT,

ME AND MY SISTER DID.

I GOT HER AUTOGRAPH.

AND SHE DIDN'T REALLY
NOTICE ME.

ON THE WAY OUT OF
THE GRANDSTAND,

I SAW HER GO SIT DOWN
IN, IN A STATION WAGON.

I SAID, "MAMA, CAN I
BORROW YOUR CAMERA?"

AND MAMA LOANED ME HER CAMERA,
SO I WENT OVER THERE.

"MISS SMITH, CAN I
TAKE YOUR PICTURE?"

AND I STUCK IT RIGHT UP IN HER
FACE AND TOOK HER PICTURE.

[CAMERA'S SHUTTER CLICKS]

SMITH: â€œ ALL DAY LONG...

SHE STILL DIDN'T NOTICE ME.

BUT, ON THE WAY HOME THAT NIGHT,

I DECLARED THAT I WAS GOING TO
MARRY CONNIE SMITH ONE DAY.

AND, UM, 25 YEARS LATER, I DID.

[CHUCKLES]

JEANNIE SEELY:

â YOUR HAND IS LIKE A TORCH

â EACH TIME YOU TOUCH ME

IN THE SIXTIES IS WHEN
THERE WERE A FEW OF US

WHO WERE COMING INTO IT
TOTALLY ON OUR OWN.

WE WERE JUST
STARTING TO STAND UP

A LITTLE BIT FOR OURSELVES.

NARRATOR: JEANNIE SEELY
WAS A SONGWRITER,

BUT SHE SANG, TOO--
IN A SOULFUL VOICE

THAT LANDED HER A CONTRACT
WITH MONUMENT RECORDS.

IN 1966, SHE CAME OUT
WITH "DON'T TOUCH ME,"

THAT ROSE TO NUMBER TWO
ON THE CHARTS

AND WON SEELY A GRAMMY AWARD.

MY SONG, "DON'T TOUCH ME," UM,

WHEN YOU THINK WHAT
IT SAYS, IT'S--

SHE'S ASSUMING
THE RESPONSIBILITY

EARLY IN THE RELATIONSHIP.

SHE'S NOT GOING
TO BE SWEEPED OFF.

SHE'S SAYING, RIGHT NOW,
"JUST DON'T EVEN TOUCH ME

IF YOU DON'T LOVE ME,"
YOU KNOW?

"THIS IS HOW I'M FEELING,
BUT IF THIS ISN'T GOING,

THEN DON'T GIVE ME SOMETHING
THAT YOU'RE GOING TO TAKE AWAY."

NARRATOR: INVITED TO APPEAR
ON THE GRAND OLE OPRY,

SHE SHOCKED THE MANAGEMENT
WHEN SHE WALKED ONSTAGE

WEARING A MINI-SKIRT.

SEELY: IT WASN'T EVEN
A REAL MINI-MINI.

[LAUGHS]

IT WAS KIND OF A SORT OF MINI,

BUT IT WAS SHORTER THAN
WHAT THEY WERE USED TO.

SO MR. DEVINE CALLED ME
INTO HIS OFFICE

TO TALK TO ME ABOUT IT
AND I DIDN'T, AT FIRST,

REALLY UNDERSTAND WHAT
HE WAS ALLUDING TO.

I DIDN'T KNOW
THERE WAS A SET RULE,

AND THEY COULDN'T SHOW ME
WHERE THERE WAS ANY.

FINALLY, I SAID, "OK,
THIS IS WHAT AMERICA IS WEARING

"AND I'LL MAKE YOU A DEAL.

"I WON'T WEAR A MINISKIRT
IN THE BACK DOOR

IF YOU DON'T LET ANYBODY
WEAR ONE IN THE FRONT DOOR."

AND HE WAS LIKE, "OK."

AND THEN--I LOVE THIS LINE--
HE SAID, "OK, WELL,

JUST TRY TO HOLD IT DOWN."

HOW DO YOU HOLD DOWN
A MINISKIRT?

[CHUCKLES]

THEY SAY, "HERE'S
A CUTE LITTLE GIRL,

GOT ON
A PRETTY, LITTLE OUTFIT."

MAN: NOW COMES OUR
BEAUTIFUL, LITTLE LADY

THAT WE'RE SO PROUD OF
HERE AT RANCH PARTY.

OUR LITTLE, TEENAGE SWEETHEART.

RIGHT NOW,
IT'S TIME FOR US TO MEET

THE PRETTY, LITTLE LADY.

I THINK I'LL GO
RIGHT BACK OVER HERE

AND VISIT WITH MY
GOOD FRIEND ERNEST TUBB

AND SEE IF I CAN'T
FIND OUT WHO THIS
LOVELY, YOUNG LADY IS.

IT'S ALWAYS A DELIGHT
TO SEE THIS PRETTY THING BACK.

THE PRETTY, LITTLE LADY.

LITTLE LADY.

RIGHT NOW, IT'S CALLS...
IT'S TIME TO CALL ON

OUR LITTLE GIRL SINGER
MISS JEANNIE SEELY.

SEELY: "COME ON AND PUT
YOUR HANDS TOGETHER

AND MAKE HER FEEL WELCOME."

THE CONNOTATION BEING,
"SHE ISN'T WELCOME,

JUST MAKE HER FEEL THAT WAY."

NARRATOR: IN 1967, ANOTHER

"PRETTY, LITTLE GIRL"

CAME ON THE SCENE.

HERE'S A LITTLE GAL
THAT I KNOW YOU'RE

GOING TO REALLY LEARN TO LOVE,
BECAUSE SHE'S A FINE SINGER

AND ONE OF THE FINEST
LITTLE GALS THAT I'VE EVER MET.

LET'S GIVE HER A GREAT, BIG
WELCOME AS SHE SINGS A SONG

THAT SHE HAD A BIG HIT ON,
CALLED "DUMB BLONDE."

SHE AIN'T NO
DUMB BLONDE, THOUGH:

PRETTY MISS DOLLY PARTON!
COME ON!

[MUSIC PLAYING]

â DON'T TRY TO CRY
YOUR WAY OUT OF THIS â

â DON'T TRY TO LIE OR
I'LL CATCH YOU IN IT... â

GILL: HER VOICE
WAS SPELLBINDING.

â ...SORRY FOR YOU

WHAT I THINK PEOPLE
ARE DRAWN TO THE MOST

IS IT SOUNDS EXACTLY LIKE
WHERE SHE'S FROM, YOU KNOW?

THAT'S EXACTLY WHAT YOU'D THINK

EAST TENNESSEE IS
SUPPOSED TO SOUND LIKE.

AND THEN, ON TOP OF THAT VOICE,

YOU HAVE ONE OF THE GREATEST
SONGWRITERS IN HISTORY.

NARRATOR: SHE WAS 21 YEARS OLD,

BUT HAD BEEN PREPARING ALL HER
LIFE FOR HER BIG CHANCE.

I GREW UP IN
THE GREAT SMOKY MOUNTAINS
OF EAST TENNESSEE.

THERE WAS A LOT OF
GOSPEL MUSIC, COUNTRY GOSPEL.

THERE WAS A LOT
OF BLUEGRASS MUSIC

AND A LOT OF JUST PURE, OLD,
COUNTRY MUSIC, YOU KNOW,

JUST SIT AROUND WHERE YOU JUST
PLAYED THE GUITAR AND A BANJO

AND AUTOHARP, DULCIMER, KIND OF
"FOLK," JUST MOUNTAIN FOLK.

MY MOTHER'S PEOPLE
WERE VERY MUSICAL.

THEY ALL PLAYED
MUSICAL INSTRUMENTS.

AND WE WERE THE FAMILY THAT
ALWAYS WOULD SING AT FUNERALS

OR WEDDINGS
AND ALL THE SHINDIGS.

NARRATOR: THE FOURTH OF 12
CHILDREN, DOLLY REBECCA PARTON

WAS BORN IN A ONE-ROOM CABIN

WITHOUT ELECTRICITY,
RUNNING WATER,

OR INDOOR PLUMBING.

THE DOCTOR WHO DELIVERED HER
WAS PAID WITH

A SACK OF CORNMEAL
FOR HIS SERVICES.

WE DIDN'T HAVE ELECTRICITY,

AND WE HAD A BATTERY RADIO.

MY DADDY USED TO WANT TO LISTEN
TO THE GRAND OLE OPRY, AND SO

WE USED TO HAVE TO GO OUT

AND POUR WATER
ON THE GROUND WIRE

AND IT WOULD WHISTLE IN AND OUT.

NARRATOR: FROM THE TIME
SHE WAS A LITTLE GIRL,

SHE WAS VIVACIOUS,
PRECOCIOUS, AND AMBITIOUS.

SHE STARTED WRITING SONGS
AT AGE 5--

HER FIRST ONE,
"LITTLE TINY TASSELTOP,"

WAS INSPIRED BY THE DOLL
HER FATHER HAD MADE FOR HER

OUT OF A CORNCOB.

GRADE-SCHOOL TEACHERS RECOGNIZED
HER REMARKABLE ABILITY

AT MEMORIZING ALMOST ANYTHING.

BY THE TIME SHE WAS 10,
SHE WAS MAKING \$20 A WEEK

APPEARING ON A KNOXVILLE
TELEVISION SHOW,

THOUGH NONE OF HER FAMILY
COULD WATCH IT

SINCE THEY DIDN'T HAVE
A TV SET AT HOME.

PARTON: I WAS ON TELEVISION
BEFORE WE EVER OWNED ONE.

BASED ON THE MONEY THAT I WAS
GETTING FROM A SHOW CALLED

"THE CAS WALKER SHOW"
IN KNOXVILLE, TENNESSEE,

I BOUGHT THE FIRST TELEVISION
WE EVER HAD IN OUR FAMILY.

NARRATOR: AS A TEENAGER,
SHE RECORDED A FEW SONGS

IN THE MOLD OF ROCKABILLY STAR
BRENDA LEE

AND SET HER SIGHTS
ON NASHVILLE.

IN 1964, THE DAY AFTER
BECOMING THE FIRST IN HER FAMILY

TO GRADUATE FROM HIGH SCHOOL,

PARTON PACKED
A CARDBOARD SUITCASE,

BOARDED A BUS,
AND HEADED FOR MUSIC CITY.

THERE, SHE WORKED PART-TIME
AS A WAITRESS AND RECEPTIONIST,

AND AUDITIONED FOR RALPH EMERY'S

EARLY-MORNING LOCAL
TELEVISION SHOW.

PARTON: "IN THE WINK OF AN EYE
MY SOUL IS TURNIN'..."

WELL, I HAD A DREAM.

AND I HAD, UM,
A TALENT, I THOUGHT.

AND I REALLY BELIEVED
THAT IT WAS GOING TO HAPPEN.

SHE SANG A GEORGE JONES
SONG CALLED

"YOU'VE GOT TO BE MY BABY"
AND JUST KILLED US.

I MEAN, FROM DAY ONE,
SHE WASN'T NERVOUS.

IT WAS LIKE SHE'D BEEN
DOING IT 100 YEARS.

SHE CAME IN AND SHE KILLED US.

NARRATOR: SOON, SHE WAS THE NEW
WOMAN STAR ON PORTER WAGONER'S

HUGELY POPULAR, NATIONALLY
SYNDICATED TELEVISION SHOW.

WAGONER TOOK HER
WITH HIM ON TOUR

MORE THAN 200 NIGHTS A YEAR;

RECORDED A SERIES
OF DUETS WITH HER;

AND HELPED GET HER
A RECORD DEAL WITH RCA.

BUT WAGONER COULD ALSO BE
CONTROLLING AND DOMINEERING,

INSISTING ON OVERSEEING
EVERY ASPECT OF HER CAREER.

PARTON BRISTLED AT
THE DOUBLE STANDARD,

AS HER SELF-WRITTEN HIT,
"JUST BECAUSE I'M A WOMAN,"

MADE PERFECTLY CLEAR.

PARTON: "AND I'M SORRY
THAT I'M NOT THE WOMAN

YOU THOUGHT I'D BE

PORTER THOUGHT
HE WAS JUST FINDING

ANOTHER GIRL TO FIT THAT SPOT.

ANYWAY, I WENT IN WITH A WHOLE--
A WHOLE BARREL OF STUFF.

YOU KNOW, I WAS A WHOLE
BALL OF WAX,

AND PORTER WASN'T USED TO THAT,

SO I HAD A MIND
OF MY OWN, TOO.

AND I WASN'T JUST GOING
TO BE TOLD WHAT TO DO

OR JUST BE THAT
AND NOTHING ELSE.

...A LONG,
LONG TIME.

WELL, I HOPE TO BE.
THANK YOU VERY MUCH.

WE'RE MIGHTY GLAD
TO HAVE YOU.
MISS DOLLY PARTON.

...SING THE RECORDS.

I HAVEN'T
CALLED YOU OUT YET.

WAIT JUST A MINUTE
THERE, KIDDO.

UH, AND WE'VE HAD A...

[TRAIN'S HORN BLOWS]

BOBBIE GENTRY: â IT WAS
THE THIRD OF JUNE â

â ANOTHER SLEEPY, DUSTY
DELTA DAY â

â I WAS OUT CHOPPING COTTON
AND MY BROTHER WAS BALING HAY â

â AND AT DINNERTIME,
WE STOPPED AND WALKED â

â BACK TO THE HOUSE TO EAT

â AND MAMA HOLLERED
OUT THE BACK DOOR, Y'ALL â

â REMEMBER TO WIPE YOUR FEET

â AND THEN SHE SAID, I GOT
SOME NEWS THIS MORNIN' â

â FROM CHOCTAW RIDGE

â TODAY, BILLIE JOE
MacALLISTER â

â JUMPED OFF
THE TALLAHATCHIE BRIDGE â

NARRATOR: IN 1967, A SONG
ABOUT A MYSTERIOUS SUICIDE

AT A BRIDGE
IN THE MISSISSIPPI DELTA

SWEPT THE AIRWAVES,
DOING EVEN BETTER

ON THE POP
AND RHYTHM AND BLUES CHARTS

THAN ON COUNTRY CHARTS.

"ODE TO BILLIE JOE" WAS WRITTEN
AND PERFORMED BY BOBBIE GENTRY,

WHO HAD BEEN BORN IN
CHICKASAW COUNTY, MISSISSIPPI

BEFORE GOING ON TO STUDY
PHILOSOPHY AT UCLA

AND MUSIC AT
THE LOS ANGELES CONSERVATORY.

SHE WAS WORKING IN LAS VEGAS--

AS A SECRETARY
AND NIGHTTIME SHOWGIRL--

WHEN SHE RECORDED HER SONG.

IT WON 3 GRAMMY AWARDS
AND SOLD 3 MILLION COPIES.

YOU SEE EVERY SCENE:
THE MOTHER SAYING,

"YOU WIPE YOUR FEET WHEN
YOU COME IN THE DOOR";

THE FATHER SAYING, "OH, THAT BOY
NEVER HAD ANY SENSE.

PASS THE BLACK-EYED PEAS";

THE BROTHER SAYING,
"DIDN'T I JUST SEE HIM

UP AT THE SAW MILL?"

AND "WE WENT TO
THE PICTURE SHOW WITH HIM."

AND THEN THE MAMA SAYING,
"WHY AREN'T YOU EATING?

WHAT'S WRONG?"

AND THEN THE LAST VERSE,
WHERE SHE SAYS,

"I SPENT A LOT OF TIME
PICKING FLOWERS UP ON THE RIDGE

AND THROWING THEM
INTO THE WATER."

AND YOU THINK,
"THAT WAS HER UP THERE. "

GENTRY: â€”a AND SHE AND BILLIE JOE
WAS THROWING SOMETHING â€”a

â€”a OFF THE TALLAHATCHIE BRIDGE

CASH: THEY WERE THROWING
SOMETHING OFF THE BRIDGE.

THE MYSTERY AT
THE HEART OF IT.

WHAT DID THEY THROW
OFF THE BRIDGE?

ANNOUNCER: THE GIRL FROM HARPER
VALLEY, MISS JEANNIE C. RILEY.

NARRATOR: IN 1968,
A SINGER NAMED JEANNIE C. RILEY

HAD PHENOMENAL SUCCESS WITH
A SONG THAT TOOK DIRECT AIM

AT SMALL-TOWN HYPOCRISY.

TOM T. HALL, THE SONGWRITER,

BASED IT ON SOMETHING
HE REMEMBERED

FROM HIS HOMETOWN IN KENTUCKY.

â€”a I WANNA TELL YOU ALL
A STORY â€”a

â€”a 'BOUT A HARPER VALLEY
WIDOWED WIFE â€”a

AND SO I RECALLED AN INCIDENT

WHERE THIS LADY HAD GOTTEN
A NOTE FROM THE PTA

AND SHE DIDN'T--WASN'T
BUYING INTO

THIS ARISTOCRACY
OF THIS COMMUNITY.

AND WHEN SHE GOT THIS NOTE
SHE SHOULDN'T BE

BRINGING UP HER DAUGHTER
THIS WAY,

WEARING MAKEUP AND EVERYTHING...

â€œ ...MAMA GOT A NOTE HERE
FROM THE HARPER VALLEY PTA â€œ

HALL: SHE JUST MARCHED INTO
THE MEETING AND TOLD THEM OFF.

RILEY: â€œ WELL, MR. HARPER
COULDN'T BE HERE â€œ

â€œ 'CAUSE HE STAYED TOO LONG
AT KELLY'S BAR AGAIN â€œ

â€œ AND IF YOU SMELL
SHIRLEY THOMPSON'S BREATH â€œ

â€œ YOU'LL FIND SHE'S HAD
A LITTLE NIP OF GIN â€œ

â€œ AND THEN YOU HAVE
THE NERVE TO TELL ME â€œ

â€œ YOU THINK THAT
AS A MOTHER I'M NOT FIT â€œ

â€œ WELL, THIS IS JUST
A LITTLE PEYTON PLACE â€œ

â€œ AND YOU'RE ALL
HARPER VALLEY HYPOCRITES â€œ

NARRATOR: RILEY,
WHO HAD GROWN UP

IN A DEEPLY RELIGIOUS FAMILY
IN A TINY TOWN IN TEXAS,

HAD BEEN IN NASHVILLE
FOR TWO YEARS--

EXPOSED TO EXECUTIVES
WHO TRIED TO SEDUCE HER

AND DEEJAYS WHO GROPED HER
AT CONVENTIONS.

"I WAS MAD AT THE WHOLE WORLD,"
SHE REMEMBERED.

"I STOOD CLOSE TO THE MIC
AND LET IT ALL POUR OUT,

SASSING EVERYTHING I HATED."

THE SONG STRUCK A CHORD,
RISING TO NUMBER ONE

ON BOTH THE COUNTRY
AND POP CHARTS,

AND SELLING 7 MILLION COPIES.

WHEN IT WON
"SINGLE OF THE YEAR"

AT THE 1968 COUNTRY MUSIC
ASSOCIATION AWARDS,

RILEY PLANNED TO WEAR
A FLOOR-LENGTH DRESS

TO THE CEREMONIES--ONLY TO FIND
THE DRESS HAD BEEN CUT SHORT

BY HER RECORD PRODUCER,
EAGER FOR HER TO APPEAR

IN A MINI-SKIRT
AND GO-GO BOOTS.

RILEY: THANK YOU.

[APPLAUSE]

ANNOUNCER: MISS JUNE CARTER.

[CHEERING AND APPLAUSE]

WOMAN: MY MOM COULD DO IT ALL.

SHE WOULD TELL YOU ANYTHING.

AND ONE NIGHT I WAS ONSTAGE
WORKING WITH THEM,

AND MY AUNT ANITA
AND HELEN AND I,

WE TIMED MAMA
TALKING BETWEEN SONGS

AND SHE TALKED FOR 17 MINUTES.

HELEN FINALLY SAID,
"JUNE, THESE PEOPLE

MIGHT WANT TO HEAR US SING."

NARRATOR: BY 1968, JUNE CARTER
WAS NOT YET 40 YEARS OLD.

AS A MEMBER OF THE "FIRST FAMILY
OF COUNTRY MUSIC,"

SHE HAD ALREADY SPENT
3 DECADES IN THE BUSINESS.

NOW WITH HER MOTHER
AND TWO SISTERS,

SHE TOURED REGULARLY
WITH JOHNNY CASH.

CASH: "WELL, SHE'S MY BABY
WHEN I'M IN NEED"

NARRATOR: JUNE WAS DEEPLY
IN LOVE WITH HIM,

BUT CASH'S ADDICTION
TO AMPHETAMINES

WAS THREATENING HIS CAREER;
HE HADN'T RECORDED

A NUMBER-ONE RECORD IN 4 YEARS,

AND HE FAILED TO SHOW UP FOR

HALF OF HIS CONCERTS
ON THE ROAD.

SHE FEARED WORSE WAS IN STORE.

CARTER: EVEN AS CHILDREN,
WE KNEW

THAT THEY HAD
SOMETHING SPECIAL.

AND MOM WAS SAYING,
"IF HE DIDN'T HAVE ME OUT HERE,

HE'D BE DEAD."

SHE REALLY FELT LIKE THAT IF SHE
WASN'T OUT ON THE ROAD WITH HIM,

KIND OF WATCHING
WHAT WAS GOING ON,

TO A CERTAIN DEGREE,
THAT HE WOULD, UM,

MESS--GET TOO MESSED UP,
AND MIGHT BE GONE LIKE HANK.

THAT'S WHAT MAMA SAID--
"I DON'T WANT TO LOSE HIM

LIKE I LOST HANK."

NARRATOR: NO ONE SEEMED TO BE
ABLE TO GET CASH TO QUIT.

ARRESTED FOR PUBLIC DRUNKENNESS
IN GEORGIA,

HE SPENT A NIGHT IN JAIL,
BUT WAS RELEASED THE NEXT DAY

BECAUSE THE JUDGE'S WIFE
WAS A BIG FAN.

"YOU WANNA KILL YOURSELF,"
THE JUDGE TOLD HIM,

"I'M GONNA GIVE YOU
YOUR GOD-GIVEN RIGHT

TO GO AHEAD AND DO THAT,
SO TAKE YOUR PILLS AND GO."

MAYBELLE CARTER TRIED KINDNESS,

JUST AS SHE HAD DONE
WITH HANK WILLIAMS.

CARTER: GRANDMA WOULD GET
THAT LITTLE CUP OF COFFEE

AND SHE'D SIT THERE AND SHE'D
PLAY CARDS AND SMOKE CIGARETTES

AND TALK AND LAUGH AND GIGGLE
AND TELL JOKES ALL NIGHT LONG.

WELL, THAT WAS FINE WITH JOHN,

SO HE ALWAYS HAD
A SOFT PLACE TO LAND.

NARRATOR: FINALLY,
JUNE GAVE HIM AN ULTIMATUM:

IF HE WANTED HER TO MARRY HIM,

HE HAD TO GET PROFESSIONAL HELP
TO FIGHT HIS DRUG HABIT.

A DOCTOR WAS BROUGHT IN,
AND FOR WEEKS,

HE AND JUNE
AND HER PARENTS KEPT

CONSTANT WATCH OVER CASH
AT HIS HOUSE NEAR NASHVILLE--

TAKING AWAY ANY PILLS
HE MANAGED TO HIDE

AND BLOCKING ANYONE ELSE FROM
SHOWING UP WITH FRESH SUPPLIES.

CARTER: WHEN HE MADE
THAT DECISION

TO REALLY, REALLY
GET STRAIGHT, THEY, UH,

THEY REALLY SURROUNDED HIM
AND SAT OUT THERE AT HIS HOUSE,

MAMA AND GRANDMA
AND GRANDDADDY.

THIS WAS THE CONDITION OF,
"IF WE'RE GETTING MARRIED,

"IF WE'RE GOING
TO EVER BE TOGETHER,

"YOU'RE GOING TO BE
AROUND MY DAUGHTERS.

"AND WE'RE ALL GOING TO BE
A FAMILY "WITH YOUR DAUGHTERS,

ALL OF US TOGETHER, YOU HAVE GOT
TO GET CLEANED UP."

CASH AND BOB DYLAN:
"I'M SO LONESOME

"I COULD CRY

NARRATOR: BY EARLY 1968,
CASH WAS CLEAN ENOUGH

AND READY TO MAKE A NEW ALBUM.

CASH: "ALL OF THIS
WAS MEANINGLESS "

" 'CAUSE HAPPINESS IS YOU

ROSANNE CASH: REDEMPTION THEMES
PLAYED OUT IN

MY DAD'S LIFE AND HIS CAREER
OVER AND OVER AND OVER.

CASH: "NO MORE
CHASING MOONBEAMS "

EVERY SHOW, EVERY DAY OF
HIS LIFE, THERE WAS THIS, UM,

A STRUGGLE AND A SEARCH
FOR REDEMPTION.

THE SAME GUY WHO SANG,
"I SHOT A MAN IN RENO

JUST TO WATCH HIM DIE," SANG,

"WERE YOU THERE WHEN
THEY CRUCIFIED MY LORD?"

IN THE SAME SHOW.

NARRATOR: CASH'S IDEA WAS
TO RECORD A LIVE PERFORMANCE

AT A PRISON, SOMETHING HE HAD
WANTED TO DO EVER SINCE

HIS FIRST PRISON CONCERT
BACK IN THE 1950s.

HE SETTLED ON THE PLACE
THAT HAD INSPIRED

ONE OF HIS BIGGEST HITS--
AND NOW THE PLACE HE HOPED

WOULD REVIVE HIS CAREER--
FOLSOM PRISON IN CALIFORNIA.

ON SATURDAY, JANUARY 13, 1968,

CASH ARRIVED AT THE PRISON.

WITH HIM WERE
THE TENNESSEE THREE:

CARL PERKINS,
THE STATLER BROTHERS,

AND JUNE CARTER.

INSIDE, 3,000 INMATES GATHERED
IN THE HUGE PRISON CAFETERIA,

SEATED AT TABLES
BOLTED TO THE FLOOR,

WHILE GUARDS WITH SHOTGUNS

WATCHED FROM A SAFE PERCH
ABOVE IT ALL.

PERKINS: "STEP ON MY
BLUE SUEDE SHOES"

NARRATOR:
CARL PERKINS WARMED THEM UP

WITH HIS EARLY ROCKABILLY HIT,
"BLUE SUEDE SHOES;"

THEN THE STATLER BROTHERS
PERFORMED "FLOWERS ON THE WALL,"

WHILE CASH WAITED JUST OFFSTAGE
FOR HIS TURN.

"I KNEW THIS WAS IT,"
HE LATER REMEMBERED,

"MY CHANCE TO MAKE UP FOR ALL
THE TIMES I HAD MESSED UP."

MAN: OK, WE'RE READY
TO DO THE RECORD SESSION.

YOU READY?

[CROWD CHEERING]

NARRATOR: WHEN HIS TIME CAME,
CASH OPENED HIS ACT

IN A NEW WAY.

MAN: OK. YOU READY?

CASH: WE'RE READY.

NARRATOR:
HE SIMPLY INTRODUCED HIMSELF...

CASH: HELLO.
I'M JOHNNY CASH.

[CROWD CHEERING]

NARRATOR: AND LAUNCHED INTO
"FOLSOM PRISON BLUES."

[MUSIC PLAYING]

CASH: "I HEAR
THE TRAIN A-COMIN' "

" IT'S ROLLIN'
ROUND THE BEND "

â AND I AIN'T
SEEN THE SUNSHINE â

â SINCE I DON'T KNOW WHEN

â I'M STUCK IN FOLSOM PRISON

â AND TIME KEEPS DRAGGIN' ON

NARRATOR: THE CONVICTS
LOVED IT.

CASH: â BUT THAT TRAIN
KEEPS A-ROLLIN' â

â ON DOWN TO SAN ANTONE

NARRATOR: AND "THEIR RESPONSE,"
MARSHALL GRANT SAID,

"INSPIRED US
TO PERFORM EVERY SONG

BETTER THAN WE HAD
EVER DONE IT BEFORE."

CASH: â BUT I SHOT A MAN IN RENO
JUST TO WATCH HIM DIE â

MAN: WHOO!

CASH: â WHEN I HEAR
THAT WHISTLE BLOWIN' â

MY FATHER HAD NEVER BEEN
CONVICTED OF A FELONY,

BUT YOU COULDN'T HARDLY
TELL A CONVICT THAT.

THEY TOOK HIM IN
AS ONE OF THEIR OWN

BECAUSE HE ACCEPTED THEM,
HE APPRECIATED THEM.

AND HE HAD THAT MAGIC ONSTAGE
THAT CONNECTED WITH THE PEOPLE.

CASH: â AFTER 7 YEARS
BEHIND THESE BARS TOGETHER â

NARRATOR: DURING HIS
TWO CONCERTS THAT DAY,

CASH SEEMED TO BE SINGING

DIRECTLY TO EACH PRISONER,
CHOOSING SONGS THAT TOUCHED ON
LONELINESS AND CONFINEMENT,
BAD LUCK AND BAD CHOICES,
AS WELL AS
IRREPRESSIBLE REBELLION--
SOMETIMES MIXING IN A LITTLE
PROFANE BANTER WITH THE AUDIENCE
AND TAUNTS AT THE WARDEN.

CASH: "OF MOTHER
IF YOU WILL"

JUNE CARTER:
"LET'S GO ON DOWN TO JACKSON

NARRATOR: WHEN JUNE CARTER
JOINED HIM ONSTAGE,

THE MEN WENT WILD.

JUNE CARTER: "GO PLAY
YOUR HAND, YOU BIG-TALKIN' MAN"

"MAKE A BIG FOOL OF YOURSELF

"YEAH, GO TO JACKSON;
GO COMB YOUR HAIR!"

CASH: "INSIDE THE WALLS
OF PRISON"

NARRATOR: BUT THE BIGGEST
RESPONSE CAME AT THE END,

WHEN CASH SANG
"GREYSTONE CHAPEL,"

WHICH HAD BEEN WRITTEN BY
ONE OF THE FOLSOM INMATES,

GLEN SHERLEY, WHO WAS
SITTING IN THE FRONT ROW.

CASH: "GREYSTONE CHAPEL
HERE AT FOLSOM"

NARRATOR:
CASH AND HIS MUSICIANS HAD ONLY
LEARNED THE SONG A DAY EARLIER,

BUT HE HAD INSISTED ON
USING IT AS THE SHOW'S FINALE

BECAUSE IT DEALT WITH
THE POSSIBILITY OF REDEMPTION

FOR EVEN THE MOST
HARDENED SINNER.

CASH: "THE SOUL
OF MANY LOST MEN"

NARRATOR:
THAT SPRING, COLUMBIA RELEASED

THE FOLSOM PRISON ALBUM
TO RAVE REVIEWS.

COMMENTATORS FROM EVERY
STYLE OF MUSIC NOW SAW IN HIM

SOMETHING THEY ALL
COULD AGREE UPON.

"TALK ABOUT MAGICAL
MYSTERY TOURS,"

THE "VILLAGE VOICE" SAID,

"CASH'S VOICE IS AS THICK
AND GRITTY AS EVER,

"BUT FILLED WITH
THE KIND OF EMOTIONALISM

YOU SELDOM FIND IN ROCK."

THE "NEW YORK TIMES"
CALLED HIS PERFORMANCE

"SOUL MUSIC OF A RARE KIND."

JAZZ CRITIC
NAT HENTOFF PROCLAIMED,

"THERE'S NO HEMMING JOHNNY CASH
INTO ANY ONE CATEGORY."

AND "ROLLING STONE" MAGAZINE,

THE BIBLE OF THE EMERGING
YOUTH COUNTERCULTURE,

PORTRAYED HIM AS AN IMPORTANT
ANTI-ESTABLISHMENT REBEL

IN THE TRADITION OF

ELVIS PRESLEY AND BOB DYLAN.

COUNTRY FANS PUSHED CASH'S
"FOLSOM PRISON BLUES"

TO NUMBER ONE ON THEIR CHARTS,

AND THE ALBUM WOULD
REMAIN ON THE POP CHARTS

FOR MORE THAN TWO YEARS,
SELLING MORE THAN

3 MILLION COPIES
IN THE UNITED STATES ALONE.

CASH: "ALL OF THIS WAS...

NARRATOR: JOHNNY CASH
HAD BECOME A SUPERSTAR.

CASH: "HAPPINESS IS YOU

" NO MORE...

NARRATOR: ONE MONTH AFTER
THE FOLSOM PRISON CONCERT,

IN FEBRUARY OF 1968,
HE PROPOSED TO JUNE CARTER

IN FRONT OF AN AUDIENCE
IN CANADA.

THIS TIME, SHE ACCEPTED.

IT WAS, HE WROTE
IN A NOTE TO HIMSELF,

"THE BEST YEAR OF MY
36 YEARS OF LIFE."

CASH: "LONELINESS
IS EMPTINESS "

" BUT HAPPINESS IS YOU

NARRATOR: BUT 1968--
ONE OF THE MOST DIVISIVE

AND TURBULENT YEARS
IN AMERICAN HISTORY--

HAD ONLY JUST BEGUN.

CASH: " AND HAPPINESS IS YOU

["HOLDING THINGS TOGETHER"
BY MERLE HAGGARD PLAYING]

â€”

â€”

HAGGARD: â€” HOLDING
THINGS TOGETHER â€”

â€” AIN'T NO EASY THING TO DO

â€” WHEN IT COMES
TO RAISIN' CHILDREN â€”

â€” IT'S A JOB MEANT FOR TWO

â€” ALICE, PLEASE BELIEVE ME

â€” I CAN'T GO ON AND ON

â€” HOLDING THINGS TOGETHER

NARRATOR: NEXT TIME
ON "COUNTRY MUSIC,"

VIETNAM DIVIDES AMERICA...

REDNECKS, HIPPIES;

ANTI-VIETNAM, PRO-VIETNAM.

NARRATOR: BOB DYLAN
MEETS JOHNNY CASH...

ROSANNE CASH: DYLAN AND DAD
TOGETHER, THAT WAS AN EXPLOSION.

NARRATOR: AND KRIS KRISTOFFERSON
COMES TO NASHVILLE.

WILLIE NELSON:
KRIS KRISTOFFERSON IS
PROBABLY THE BEST SONGWRITER.

COMPARE KRIS WITH GERSHWIN
OR ANYBODY ELSE.

NARRATOR: WHEN "COUNTRY MUSIC"
CONTINUES.

KRISTOFFERSON: â€” LET IT FALL

TO EXPERIENCE MORE
OF COUNTRY MUSIC,

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HISTORICAL TIMELINES,

BEHIND THE SCENES FOOTAGE,
AND MUSIC PLAYLISTS.

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AND OTHER FILMS FROM KEN BURNS

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ON THE PBS VIDEO APP.

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MUSIC" ON DVD OR BLU-RAY

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IS ALSO AVAILABLE.

THIS PROGRAM IS AVAILABLE
ON AMAZON PRIME VIDEO.

â IT'S A JOB MEANT FOR TWO

â ALICE, PLEASE BELIEVE ME

â I CAN'T GO ON AND ON

â HOLDING THINGS TOGETHER

â WITH YOU GONE

â ALICE, PLEASE BELIEVE ME

â I CAN'T GO ON AND ON

â HOLDING THINGS TOGETHER

â WITH YOU GONE